

# *Śrī Vedānta-sūtra*

With the *Govinda-bhāṣya* Commentary of Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa  
Translated by His Grace Kuṣakratha das Brahmācārī

## **Adhyāya 1**

**Expanded Commentary and Vedic Evidence**

— by —

**Śrī Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī**

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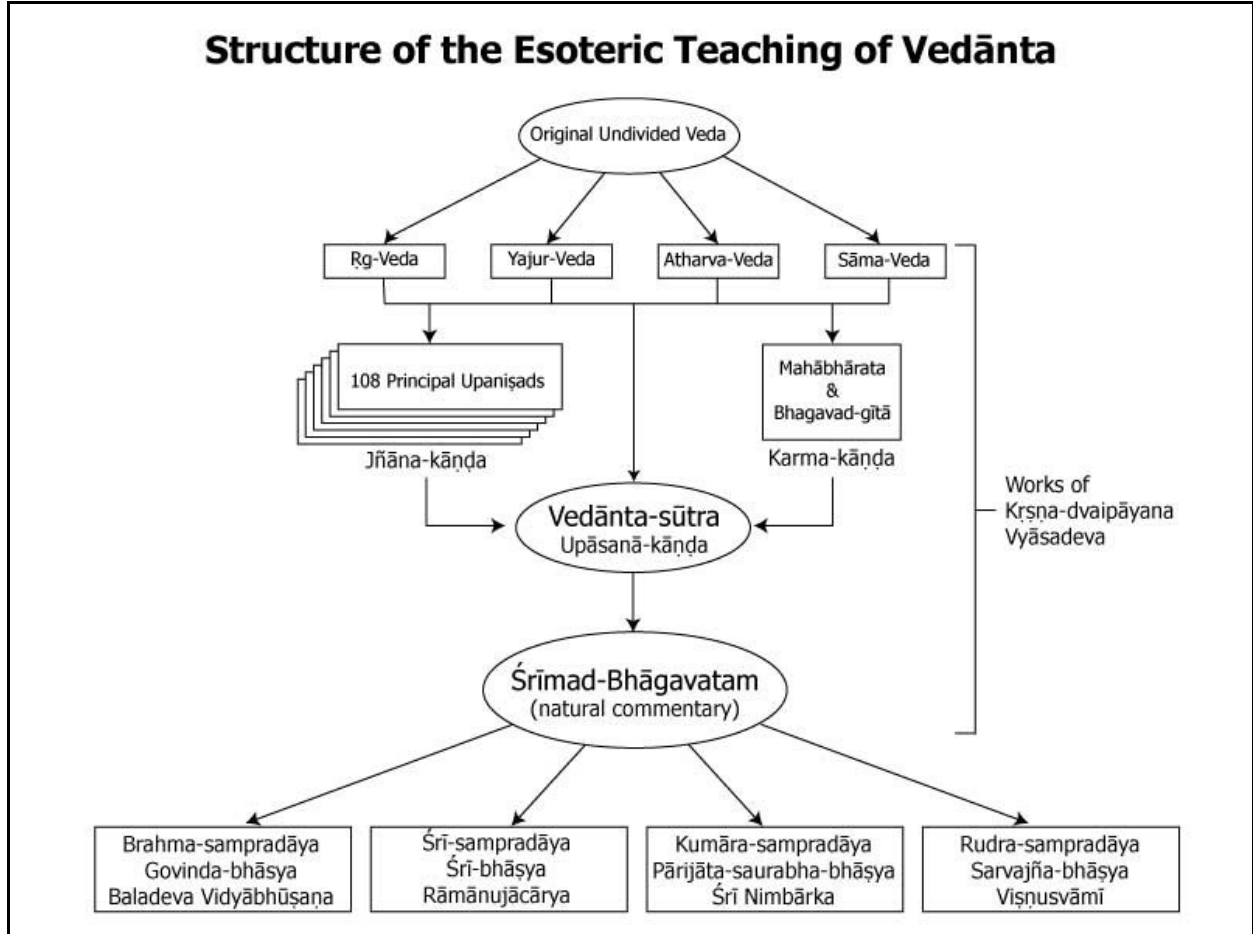
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# Author's Preface

by David Bruce Hughes (Gaurahari Dasanudas Babaji)



*Vedānta-sūtra* is the ultimate knowledge of the *Vedas*. Vedic knowledge is very elevated, having issued forth from Mahā-Viṣṇu, the Supreme Godhead, at the time of creation. The *Vedānta-sūtras* are extremely laconic, recondite and esoteric, and are thus accessible to ordinary human intelligence only in the context of a commentary. The natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* is the *Bhagavata-Purāṇa* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, written by the same author, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, Himself recognized as an incarnation of God in the Vedic literature.

The story of *Vedānta-sūtra* is narrated in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* and the author of *Mahābhārata*, after writing many sacred Vedic texts and dividing them among his various disciples, was feeling depressed due to the onset of evil in the age of Kali, the current Vedic historical period. He could see that due to faithlessness, the people in general would be reduced in wealth, happiness and duration of life, and would always be disturbed due to lack of goodness and religious principles. Thus he contemplated the Absolute Truth for the spiritual welfare of men in all statuses and orders of life.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva had unpretentiously worshiped the *Vedas*, the spiritual master and the altar of sacrifice under strict disciplinary vows. He also abided by the rulings of the scriptures and showed the import of disciple succession through the explanation of the *Mahābhārata*, by which anyone and everyone can

see the path of religion. However, after His mature contemplation, He concluded that His dissatisfaction was due to the fact that He had not specifically pointed out the devotional service of the Lord, which is dear both to perfected beings and to the infallible Lord Himself.

Just as Vyāsadeva was regretting His defects, Vyāsadeva’s spiritual master Nārada reached His cottage on the banks of the Sarasvatī. At the auspicious arrival of Śrī Nārada, Śrī Vyāsadeva got up respectfully and worshiped him, giving him veneration equal to that given to Brahmājī, the creator. Nārada confirmed that Vyāsadeva’s dissatisfaction was because, although He compiled the divisions of *karma-kaṇḍa* [fruitive work] in the *Vedas* and *jñāna-kaṇḍa* [speculative knowledge] in the *Upaniṣads*, these are flawed because they identify the gross and subtle body, respectively, as objects of self-realization.

Śrī Nārada concluded: “You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless. Although, great sage, You have very broadly described the four Vedic principles [*dharma, ārtha, kāma* and *mokṣa*], You have not described the glories of the Supreme Personality, Vāsudeva. Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there. On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.8-11]

Heeding the instructions of His spiritual master, Vyāsadeva then sat in meditation. As He contemplated His task, He saw that the various misunderstandings and false doctrines invented by faulty human intelligence were great obstacles on the path of complete self-realization. Not wanting to break His meditation to write about his realizations in detail, He jotted them down concisely in the form of *sūtras* and instructed them to His disciples. A *sūtra* is a short, pithy statement of the essence of a spiritual truth. The *sūtras* of *Vedānta* are so laconic and abstruse that their proper context and relationship are impossible to deduce from the *sūtras* themselves. A commentary is required to bring them within range of human understanding, so Vyāsadeva wrote *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to expand and explain *Vedānta-sūtra*. Thus the beautiful *Bhāgavatam* is the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*; this is explained in *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

*artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇām  
bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ  
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau  
vedārtha-paribṛmhitah*  
  
*purāṇānām sāma-rūpaḥ  
sākṣād-bhagavatoditah  
dvādaśa-skandha-yukto 'yaṁ  
śata-viccheda-saṁyutah  
grantho 'ṣṭādaśa-sāhasraḥ  
śrīmad-bhāgavatābhidhah*

“The meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is present in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The full purport of the *Mahābhārata* is also there. The commentary of the Brahma-gāyatrī is also there and fully expanded with all Vedic knowledge. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the supreme *Purāṇa*, and it was



compiled by the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His incarnation as Vyāsadeva. There are twelve cantos, 335 chapters and eighteen thousand verses.”

The questions raised in the beginning of *Vedānta-sūtra* are answered in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*athāto brahma-jijñāsā  
janmādy asya yataḥ*

“Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Brahman. Brahman is He from Whom everything emanates.” [*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.1-2]

*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya  
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhiṣaḥ svarāt*

“O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1]

Thus if we want to understand the real purport of *Vedānta-sūtra*, we must study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Of course there are many other commentaries, most prominently those by the great *ācāryas* of the four Vaiṣṇava lineages, such as Rāmānujācārya and Madhvācārya. The commentary of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the lineage descended from Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in which we have the great good fortune to be an initiate, is the *Govinda-bhāṣya* of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, which is solidly based on the revelations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The story of the extraordinary appearance of *Govinda-bhāṣya* is as follows:

In the eighteenth century Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa were the custodians of the treasure of Lord Caitanya’s teachings and were worshipping Lord Govinda. They were challenged by an opposing group, the Rāmānandīs, to produce a commentary on *Vedānta* or forfeit their integrity as *gurus* and their right to worship the Deity. It is customary for an *ācārya* to establish his *sampradāya* on the basis of a *Vedānta-sūtra* commentary. Since the followers of Lord Caitanya accept the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, there was no need to compile another. However, to defeat their opponents, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa produced a commentary by hearing it directly from the Deity Śrī Govinda. Govindaji appeared in a dream to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and told him that He would dictate the proper commentary to him. So *Govinda-bhāṣya* was written in a short time and presented in the assembly of the king and representatives of the *Śrī-sampradāya* in Jaipur. They were dumbstruck by this exposition and offered to become Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s disciples. However, he refused out of his sincere humility. In the pages of *Govinda-bhāṣya* Baladeva authenticated the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*’s connection with the line of Madhvācārya, coming through Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, Madhavendra Purī and Īśvara Purī.

This *Govinda-bhāṣya* is the basis of the present work. It was first translated into English in 1912 by the Bengali scholar Śrīsa Chandra Vasu and published in Benares. Later on our Godbrother Kuśakratha Prabhu produced a fragmentary translation in the style of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Both of these works furnish the source material for this book. Vasu’s translation is particularly valuable for its extended references from the *Upaniṣads*. However, I have added many additional quotations from my spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as explanatory sections where I link the topics of each Adhikaraṇa with issues of importance familiar to contemporary thought.

The purpose of this book is to fulfill my spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions regarding the process of authorizing initiating spiritual masters in his line. He wrote:

“So you have now taken charge of the sunrise of New Vrindaban. Our program is there for constructing seven temples. One Rupanuga Vidyapitha—that is a school for educating *brahmanas* and Vaisnavas. We have enough of technological and other types of educational institutions, but perhaps there is none where actual *brahmanas* and Vaisnavas are produced. So we will have to establish an educational institution for that purpose.

“A first examination will be held sometimes next January on *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, and those passing will have the degree of Bhakti-sastri. Next year we will hold an examination on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and the person who passes will have the title Bhakti-vaibhava. And the next year we shall hold an examination on *Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Nectar of Devotion* and *Vedanta Sutra*, and those who will successfully pass will be awarded with the title of Bhaktivedanta. By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna Consciousness population.” [letter to Kirtanananda Swami, 12 January 1969]

Unfortunately, due to the immaturity of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples, these instructions were never carried out. Yet they remain the only unambiguous written instructions detailing the qualifications for initiating spiritual masters in succession from Śrīla Prabhupāda for his worldwide movement. At the time of writing, none of the initiating *gurus* in succession from Śrīla Prabhupāda have satisfied this requirement, except for our humble self. If as Śrīla Prabhupāda himself predicted, our movement is to remain the source of Vedic spiritual authority on this planet for the next 10,000 years, then it must be based solidly on the conclusions of the *Vedas* as expressed in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Therefore there is a great need in the international society of devotees for a contemporary English edition of *Vedānta-sūtra*, to serve as a textbook for study by those who would follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s clear instructions for authorizing initiating spiritual masters. For as stated in *Vedānta-sūtra* itself, an authentic *guru* is not an mere official of a religious organization appointed by his peers through some political process, but a fully self-realized soul in intimate relationship with the Supreme Lord Himself. Only someone who has attained direct personal *darśana* of the Lord is qualified to write about exalted subjects such as *Vedānta-sūtra*, for only such a person has actual personal experience of the topics discussed in the text.

Our qualification for this work is due to the confidential instructions received from Śrīla Prabhupāda, through his beloved sister Pishima, at the time of his passing from this world. Śrīla Prabhupāda warned me that there would be many problems in ISKCON, the society that he founded, and that I should leave ISKCON and work independently and quietly for 25 years. Then, he told me, I should begin to preach and reveal everything, and that Lord Govinda would protect me. Now by the great blessings of my spiritual master, the inconceivable mercy of the Lord, and the selfless support and service of my dedicated disciples Uddhava, Florian, Neville, Conor, Carl and many more, all this is gradually coming to pass.

My spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda is an ocean of mercy. He deeply studied, understood and realized Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana’s *Govinda-bhāṣya*, and based his own writing and preaching work solidly on its exalted ontological platform and vast scope. Whatever I have been able to understand, realize and write about spiritual life and especially *Vedānta-sūtra* is due only to his blessings. Therefore I offer my obeisances unto him, for whatever success we may have in presenting *Vedānta-sūtra* is by His Divine Grace alone.

David Bruce Hughes (Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī)  
Esoteric Teaching Seminars Master Course Retreat  
Village of Benito Juarez,

Veracruz, Mexico  
June 4, 2008

## Introduction to *Vedānta-sūtra*

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ  
brahma-śivādi-stutaṁ bhajad-rūpam  
govindaṁ tam acintyaṁ  
hetum adoṣaṁ namasyāmaḥ*

“Lord Govinda is the Supreme Brahman, the absolute transcendental reality. He is transcendental knowledge. He is the original cause of all causes. He is limitless and faultless. Lord Śiva and all the demigods praise Him. The devotees worship His transcendental form. We offer our respectful obeisances unto Him.”

*sūtrāṁśubhis tamāṁsi  
vyudasya vastūni yaḥ parīkṣayate  
sa jayati satyavataye  
harir anuvṛtto nata-preṣṭhaḥ*

“All glories to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the son of Satyavatī. Vyāsadeva is the incarnation of Lord Hari, and He is very dear to the devotees. With the effulgence of His *Vedānta-sūtra* He has dispelled the darkness of ignorance and revealed the truth.”

During the Dvāpara-yuga the *Vedas* were destroyed. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, responding to the prayers of Lord Brahmā and the other bewildered demigods, appeared as Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, restored the *Vedas*, divided them into parts, and composed the *Vedānta-sūtra* in four sections to explain them. This is described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

At that time many fools propounded various misinterpretations of the *Vedas*. Some said that the highest goal of life was to act piously in order to reap the benefits of good *karma*. Some said that Lord Viṣṇu is Himself bound by the laws of *karma*. Some maintained that the fruits of good *karma*, such as residence in *svarga* [the upper material planets] were eternal. Some said the *jīvas* [individual living entities] and *prakṛti* [material energy] acted independently, without being subject to any higher power, or God. Some said the *jīvas* [individual living entities] are actually the Supreme Brahman [God], and that the *jīvas* are simply bewildered about their identity, or that the *jīvas* are a reflection of God, or separated fragments of God. Some said that the *jīva* becomes free from the cycle of repeated birth and death when He understands his real identity as the perfectly spiritual Supreme Brahman [God].

*Vedānta-sūtra* presents and then refutes all these misconceptions, and establishes Lord Viṣṇu as supremely independent, the original creator and cause of all causes, omniscient, the ultimate goal of life for all living entities, the supreme religious principle and the supreme transcendental knowledge.

The *Vedānta-sūtra* describes five *tattvas* [principal ontological categories of existence]: 1. *īśvara* [the Supreme Personality of Godhead]; 2. *jīva* [the individual living entity, or spirit soul]; 3. *prakṛti* [matter]; 4. *kāla* [time]; and 5. *karma* [action]. The *īśvara* or Supreme Lord is omniscient, but the *jīva* soul has only limited knowledge. Still, both are eternal beings, are aware of the spiritual reality, and have a variety of spiritual qualities. Both are alive, have personality, and are aware of their own identity.

At this point someone may object: “In one place you have said that the Supreme Godhead is omniscient, and in another place you have said that He is knowledge itself. This is a contradiction, for

the knower and the object of knowledge must be different. They cannot be the same."

To this objection I reply: Just as a lamp is not different from the light it emanates, and its light reveals not only other objects but also itself by its luminescence, in the same way the Supreme Personality of Godhead is simultaneously the supreme knower and the supreme object of knowledge. There is no contradiction inherent in the concepts that God is pure consciousness, and at the same time Self-conscious.

Now let us consider the five *tattvas* or ontological categories of existence given above.

1. *Īśvara* or the one Supreme Personality of Godhead is supremely independent. He is the master of all potencies. He creates the universe, then enters and controls it. He arranges for the material suffering and enjoyment of the living entities residing in material bodies through the laws of *karma*, and awards ultimate liberation to qualified individual spirit souls [*jīvas*]. Although He is one, He manifests in many forms. They who understand the transcendental science maintain that although He is one and indivisible, He is not different from His innumerable transcendental forms and qualities. Although He cannot be perceived by the material senses, He can be perceived by *bhakti* [devotional service]. He is changeless. He reveals His own blissful spiritual form to His devotees.
2. The many *jīvas* [individual spirit souls] are situated in different conditions of existence. Some are averse to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and turn their faces from Him. Such *jīvas* are bound by material illusion. Other *jīvas* are friendly to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and turn their faces to Him. These *jīvas* become free from the bondage of material illusion, which hides both the Supreme Lord's form and His qualities, and in this way they become able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face-to-face.
3. *Prakṛti* [material nature] is the total material nature, consisting of the three modes: goodness, passion and ignorance. *Prakṛti* is known by many names, such as *tamaḥ* [ignorance] and *māyā* [illusion]. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead glances at *prakṛti*, she becomes able to perform her various duties. *Prakṛti* is the mother of many variegated material universes.
4. *Kāla* [time] is the origin of past, present, future, simultaneity, slowness, quickness, and many other similar states. *Kāla* is divided by the Vedic literature into many different units, from the extremely brief *truṭi* [about 0.0006 second] to the extremely long *parārdha* [50 years of Lord Brahmā, or about 155,100,000,000 terrestrial years]. Turning like a wheel, time is the cause of repeated creation and annihilation of the universes. Time is an unconscious, unintelligent substance; unlike the three previous *tattvas*, it is not a person.

These four *tattvas* [*īśvara*, *jīva*, *prakṛti*, and *kāla*] are eternal. This is confirmed by the following scriptural quotations:

*aham evāsam evāgre  
nānyad yat sad-asat param  
paścād ahaṁ yad etac ca  
yo 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham*

“Brahmā, it is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead, and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.33]

*sad eva saumyedaṁ agra āsīt*

“My dear saintly student, please understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternal. He is existed before the manifestation of this universe.” [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1]

*nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām  
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān  
taṁ pīṭha-gaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās  
teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣāṁ*

“Of all the eternal living entities, one [the Supreme Personality of Godhead] is the supreme eternal. Of all conscious entities one [the Supreme Personality of Godhead] is the supreme conscious entity who supplies the needs of everyone else. The wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace. Others cannot.” [Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad 6.13 and Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13]

*gaur anādy anantavatī*

“Prakṛti is like a cow who was never born and never dies.” [Culika Upaniṣad, Mantra 5]

*aham evākṣayaḥ kālo*

“I am time, which is certainly inexhaustible.” [Bhagavad-gītā 10.33]

The *jīvas*, *prakṛti*, and *kāla* are subordinate to *īśvara*, and subject to His control. This is confirmed by the following statement of Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad [6.16]:

*sa viśva-kṛd viśva-vid ātma-yonir  
jñāḥ kāla-kāro guṇi sarva-vid yaḥ  
pradhāna-ksetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ  
saṁsāra-mokṣa-sthiti-bandha-hetuḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead [īśvara] is the creator of the material universes. He is the creator of everything that exists within the universes. He is the father of all living entities. He is the creator of time. He is full of all transcendental virtues. He is omniscient. He is the master of *pradhāna* [the unmanifest material nature]. He is the master of the *guṇas* [three modes of material nature]. He is the master of the individual spirit souls residing in material bodies [*kṣetrajña*]. He imprisons the conditioned souls in the material world, and He also becomes their liberator from bondage.”

5. *Karma* [the result of fruitive action] is not a conscious, living person. It is the mechanical material principle of cause and effect. Although no one can trace out its beginning, it has a definite end at some point in time; therefore it is not eternal, and that is our hope of deliverance. It is known by the name *adr̥ṣṭa* [the unseen hand of fate] and many other names such as destiny, fortune, etc.

These four [*jīva*, *prakṛti*, *kāla*, and *karma*] are all potencies of *īśvara*, the supreme master of all potencies. Because everything that exists is the potency of the Supreme, the Vedic literatures declare: “Only Brahman exists, and nothing is separate from Him.” This fact is nicely explained in the four Adhyāyas [divisions] of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the perfect commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, the Supreme *īśvara* and His potencies are described in the following words:

*bhakti-yogena manasi  
samyak praṇihite 'male  
apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ  
māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam*

“Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service [*bhakti-yoga*] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Godhead along with His external energy, which was under full control.”

*yayā sammohito jīva  
ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmakam  
paro 'pi manute 'nartham  
tat-kṛtaṁ cābhipadyate*

“Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries.”

*anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād  
bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje  
lokasyājānato vidvāṁś  
cakre sātvata-saṁhitām*

“The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.4-6]

*dravyaṁ karma ca kālāś ca  
svabhāvo jīva eva ca  
yad-anugrahataḥ santi  
na santi yad-upekṣayā*

“One should definitely know that all material ingredients, activities, time and modes, and the living entities who are meant to enjoy them all, exist by His mercy only, and as soon as He does not care for them, everything becomes nonexistent.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.10.12]

That *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* is confirmed by the following statement of *Garuḍa Purāṇa*:

*artho 'yam brahma-sūtrānām*

“*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.”

An *Adhikārī* or person who is qualified to study *Vedānta-sūtra* is one whose heart is peaceful, pure, self-controlled, pious, and free from material desires, who is eager to associate with saintly devotees, who has faith in the Lord and the scriptures, who is eager to discharge his religious duties, and who is decorated with saintly qualities, is qualified to study the scriptures and strive after Brahman.

The *Sambandha* or relationship expressed in *Vedānta-sūtra* is that the scriptures describe Brahman, and Brahman is the object described in the scriptures. The *Viśaya* or subject matter of *Vedānta-sūtra* and other Vedic scriptures is the description of Brahman as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is the master of unlimited inconceivable potencies, and who possesses unlimited pure, transcendental attributes. The *Prayojana* or result of properly understanding the *Vedānta-sūtra* and other Vedic scriptures is that the spiritual aspirant becomes free from all material imperfections, and able to see the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, face-to-face.

The *Vedānta-sūtra*, which consists of aphorisms revealing the method of understanding Vedic knowledge, is the concise form of all Vedic knowledge. It begins with the words *athāto brahma*

*jijñāsā*: “Now is the time to inquire about the Absolute Truth.” The human form of life is especially meant for this purpose, and therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* very concisely explains the human mission. This is confirmed by the words of the *Vāyu* and *Skanda Purāṇas*, which define a *sūtra* as follows:

*alpākṣaram asandigdham sāra-vat viśvato-mukham  
astobham anavadyam ca sūtram sūtra-vido viduḥ*

“A *sūtra* is a compilation of aphorisms that expresses the essence of all knowledge in a minimum of words. It must be universally applicable and faultless in its linguistic presentation.”

Anyone familiar with such *sūtras* must be aware of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which is well known among scholars by the following additional names: [1] *Brahma-sūtra*, [2] *Śārīraka*, [3] *Vyāsa-sūtra*, [4] *Bādarāyaṇa-sūtra*, [5] *Uttara-mīmāṃsā* and [6] *Vedānta-darśana*.

There are four sections [Adhyāyas] in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and there are four divisions [*pādas*] in each chapter. Therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* may be referred to as *ṣoḍaśa-pāda*, or sixteen divisions of aphorisms. The theme of each and every division is fully described in terms of different subject matters [*adhikaraṇas*], which have five divisions technically called *pratijñā* [declaration], *hetu* [cause], *udāharaṇa* [example], *upanaya* [bringing closer] and *nigamana* [scriptural quotes]. Every theme must necessarily be explained with reference to *pratijñā*, or a solemn declaration of the purpose of the treatise. The solemn declaration given in the beginning of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is *athāto brahma jijñāsā*, which indicates that this book was written with the solemn declaration to inquire about the Absolute Truth. Similarly, each *adhikaraṇa* in *Vedānta-sūtra* displays all five syllogistic parts: the theme must be declared [*pratijñā*] and any objections or counter-arguments discovered and counteracted, reasons must be expressed [*hetu*], examples must be given in terms of various facts [*udāharaṇa*], the theme must gradually be brought nearer for understanding [*upanaya*], and finally it must be supported by authoritative quotations from the Vedic *śāstras* [*nigamana*].

According to the great dictionary compiler Hemacandra, also known as Koṣakāra, *Vedānta* refers to the purport of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the *Vedas*. Professor Apte, in his dictionary, describes the *Brāhmaṇa* portion of the *Vedas* as that portion which states the rules for employment of hymns at various sacrifices and gives detailed explanations of their origin, sometimes with lengthy illustrations in the form of legends and stories. It is distinct from the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas*. Hemacandra says that the supplement of the *Vedas* is called the *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Veda* means knowledge, and *anta* means the end. In other words, proper understanding of the ultimate purport of the *Vedas* is called *Vedānta* knowledge. Such knowledge, as given in the aphorisms of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, must be supported by the *Upaniṣads*.

According to learned scholars, there are three different sources of knowledge, which are called *prasthāna-traya*. According to these scholars, *Vedānta* is one of such sources, for it presents Vedic knowledge on the basis of logic and sound arguments. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [13.5] the Lord says,

*ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītām  
chandobhir vividhaiḥ prthak  
brahma-sūtra-padaiś caiva  
hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ*

“That knowledge of the field of activities and of the knower of activities is described by various sages in various Vedic writings—especially in the *Vedānta-sūtra*—and is presented with all reasoning as to cause and effect.”

In the Vedic literature there are three divisions of transcendental knowledge, called *prasthāna-traya*. Knowledge which is proved by Vedic instruction like the *Upaniṣads* is called *śruti-prasthāna*.



Authoritative books indicating the ultimate goal and written by liberated souls like Vyāsadeva—for example, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Mahā-Purāṇa*—are called *smṛti-prasthāna*. From Vedic literatures we understand that the *Vedas* originated from the breathing of Nārāyaṇa. Vyāsadeva, who is an incarnation of the power of Nārāyaṇa, has compiled the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Therefore the *Vedānta-sūtra* is known as *nyāya-prasthāna*, the *Upaniṣads* are known as *śruti-prasthāna*, and the *Gītā*, *Mahābhārata* and *Purāṇas* are known as *smṛti-prasthāna*. All scientific knowledge of transcendence must be supported by *śruti*, *smṛti* and a sound logical basis [*nyāya*].

It is said that both the Vedic knowledge and the supplement of the *Vedas* called the *Sātvata-pañcarātra* emanated from the breathing of Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Vedānta-sūtra* aphorisms were compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a powerful incarnation of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. The *Nārada-pañcarātra*, a directory of devotional service, and *Vedānta-sūtra* express the same opinions. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore confirms that there is no difference in opinion between the two, and He declares that because the *Vedānta-sūtra* was compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, it may be understood to have emanated from the breathing of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura comments that while Vyāsadeva was compiling the *Vedānta-sūtra*, seven of his great saintly contemporaries were also engaged in similar work. These saints were Ātreya Rṣi, Āśmarathya, Auḍulomi, Kārṣṇājini, Kāśakṛtsna, Jaimini and Bādarī. In addition, it is stated that Pārāśarī and Karmandī-bhikṣu also discussed the *Vedānta-sūtra* aphorisms before Vyāsadeva.

As mentioned above, the *Vedānta-sūtra* consists of four Adhyāyas or sections. The first two Adhyāyas discuss the relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is known as *sambandha-jñāna*, or knowledge of the relationship. The third Adhyāya describes how one can act in his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called *abhidheya-jñāna*. The relationship of the living entity with the Supreme Lord is described by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *jīvera 'svarūpa' haya kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'*. “The living entity is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme God.” [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 20.108] Therefore, to act in that relationship one must perform *sādhana-bhakti*, or the prescribed duties of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called *abhidheya-jñāna*. The fourth Adhyāya describes the result of such devotional service [*prayojana-jñāna*]. This ultimate goal of life is to go back home, back to Godhead. The words *anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt* in the *Vedānta-sūtra* indicate this ultimate goal.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a powerful incarnation of Nārāyaṇa, compiled the *Vedānta-sūtra*, and in order to protect it from unauthorized commentaries, he personally composed *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on the instruction of his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, as the original commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Besides *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there are commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra* composed by all the major Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, and in each of them devotional service to the Lord is described very explicitly. Only those who follow Śaṅkara's commentary have described the *Vedānta-sūtra* in an impersonal way, without reference to *viṣṇu-bhakti*, or devotional service to the Lord, Viṣṇu. Generally people very much appreciate this *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, or impersonal description of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, but all commentaries that are devoid of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu must be considered to differ in purport from the original *Vedānta-sūtra*. In other words, Lord Caitanya definitely confirmed that the commentaries, or *bhāṣyas*, written by the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* on the basis of devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu, and not the *Śārīraka-bhāṣya* of Śaṅkarācārya, give the actual explanation of the *Vedānta-sūtra*.

The Vedic literature is not open to unauthorized speculative misinterpretation to support our pet theories; it gives the following guidelines for interpretation of difficult or ambiguous Sanskrit verses:

*upakramopasamhārāv abhyāso 'pūrvata-phalam  
artha-vāadopapattī ca liṅgaṁ tātparyā-nirṇaye*

“The beginning, the ending, what is repeated again and again, what is unique and novel, the general purpose of the book, the author’s statement of his own intention, and appropriateness are the factors to consider in interpretation of obscure passages.”

If we apply these criteria, called *samanvaya*, to interpreting difficult passages in the Vedic literature, we clearly see that the *Vedas* consistently describe the Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entity as two distinct entities. For example, let us analyze the following passage from *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* [4.6-7] in the light of the above six criteria:

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśaṣvajāte  
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty anaśnann anyo ‘bhicakāśīti*

“The individual living entity and the superconscious living entity, Brahman or the Personality of Brahman, are like two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds [the individual living entity] is eating the fruit of the tree [the sense gratification afforded by the material body], and the other bird [the superconscious living entity] is not trying to eat these fruits, but is simply watching His friend.”

*samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno ‘nīśāya śocati muhyamānaḥ  
juṣṭam yadā paśyati anyam īsam asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ*

“Although the two birds are on the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness, bewildered by his own ignorance as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his eternal friend Brahman and knows His glories, at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties.”

In this passage, the *upakrama* [beginning] is *dvā suparṇā* [two birds]; the *upasaṁhāra* [ending] is *anyam īsam* [the other person, who is Brahman or the Personality of Brahman]; the repeated feature is the word *anyā* [the other person], as in the phrases *tayor anyo* ‘śnan [the other person does not eat] and *anyam īsam* [he sees the other person, who is the Supreme Brahman]. The *apūrvata* [unique feature] is the relationship between the individual conscious living entity and the Supreme Brahman, which cannot be understood without the revelation of the Vedic scripture; the *phalam* [object or general purpose of the passage] is *vīta-śokaḥ* [the individual conscious living entity becomes free from suffering by seeing Brahman]. The *artha-vāda* [author’s statement of his own intention] is *mahimānam eti* [one who understands the Supreme Brahman becomes glorious] and the *upapattī* [appropriateness] is *anyo ‘naśan* [the other person, the Supreme Brahman, does not eat the fruits of material happiness and distress].

By carefully analyzing this passage, we see that in all six points of interpretation, it teaches the difference between the *jīva* and Brahman. One can analyze many other passages from Vedic literatures in the same way, and one may clearly understand the difference between the Personality of Brahman and the individual living entity. As we present the *sūtras*, we will analyze each one in detail according to the principles of *samanvaya*, providing a wealth of detailed quotations from the original Vedic literature and showing their correct interpretations.

## The Structure of *Vedānta-sūtra*

The structure of *Vedānta-sūtra* consists of four divisions called *Adhyāyas*; each *Adhyāya* has four parts called *Pādas*; each *Pāda* contains several *Adhikaraṇas*, or topics; each *Adhikaraṇa* contains one or more *sūtras*.

*Adhikaraṇas*—Vedic syllogisms—consist of five parts: 1. *viśaya* [thesis, or statement]; 2. *saṁśaya* [the arising of doubt in the tenability of the statement]; 3. *pūrvapakṣa* [presentation of an antithetical view

opposing the original statement] 4. *siddhānta* [determination of the actual truth, the final Vedic conclusion, in the form of a *sūtra*], and 5. *saṅgati* or consistency.

*Saṅgati* requires that each Adhikaraṇa remain harmonious with the Vedic literature. The *saṅgati* of an Adhikaraṇa is of four kinds:

- *śāstra-saṅgati* [confirmation of the final conclusion established by quoting from the Vedic scriptures];
- *adhyāya-saṅgati* [consistency with the theme or subject of the whole Adhyāya];
- *pāda-saṅgati* [consistency with the entire Pāda];
- *adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* [consistency with previous and subsequent Adhikaraṇas].

The subject of the entire *Vedānta-sūtra*, and indeed the entire Vedic literature, is Brahman; therefore to maintain *śāstra-saṅgati*, the interpretation of each *sūtra* must remain consistent with the subject of Brahman. Each Adhyāya in *Vedānta-sūtra* has a particular topic.

- The First Adhyāya explains that Brahman is the subject matter discussed in all Vedic literatures.
- The Second Adhyāya explains that all Vedic literatures, although variegated, do not actually contradict each other; they present the same conclusion.
- The Third Adhyāya describes how to attain Brahman
- The Fourth Adhyāya explains the result of attaining Brahman.

Therefore to maintain *adhyāya-saṅgati*, each passage must remain consistent with the theme of its Adhyāya. Maintaining *pāda-saṅgati* is similar; each Adhikaraṇa must show consistency with the theme of the Pāda in which it appears.

Besides these three kinds of *saṅgati*, *adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* shows that each Adhikaraṇa is consistent with the preceding and following Adhikaraṇas. Each of the Adhikaraṇas in a particular Pāda leads to the next through a particular association, relationship or progression of thoughts. *Adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* is thus of six kinds:

- *ākṣepa-saṅgati* [objection]
- *dr̥ṣṭānta-saṅgati* [illustration]
- *prati-dr̥ṣṭānta-saṅgati* [counter-illustration]
- *prasaṅga-saṅgati* [incidental illustration]
- *utpatti-saṅgati* [introduction]
- *apavāda-saṅgati* [exception]

We will note the type of *adhikaraṇa-saṅgati* at the beginning of each Adhikaraṇa.

# The Domain and Nomenclature of Absolute Truth

*athāto brahma-jijñāsā*

“Now, therefore, one should inquire about Brahman.” [*Vedānta-sutra* 1.1.1]

The first principle of *Vedānta* is to inquire into Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth, for the purpose of this discussion, is defined as the source from which everything emanates, or Brahman.

The domain of inquiry into Absolute Truth of *Vedānta* is therefore, in the broadest sense, the field of ontology or the study of origins. Absolute Truth corresponds to absolute existence, which is the source of the relative existence described by relative truth. Since Absolute Truth is eternal, it exists *a priori* and *a posteriori* relative, limited, temporary existence and relative truth.

Relative truth describes relative existence as a thing in itself, without reference to Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth describes absolute existence, and can also describe relative existence in the context of its proper relation to absolute existence. Absolute Truth therefore is unconditional, all-inclusive and self-referential, whereas relative truth is exclusive, conditional, and dependent for its meaning on the constantly changing conditions of relative existence.

Everything we experience in relative existence has its source in Absolute Truth. Therefore although Absolute Truth is by definition unary and undifferentiated, one without a second, it also contains all attributes of relative existence, including multiplicity, illusion, emanation, energy, form, activity, individuality, personality, identity, desire, consciousness, perception, variety, cause and effect, and paradoxically, also contains all the opposite qualities.

All qualities originate in Absolute Truth, which has no qualities and all qualities simultaneously. After all, the source of everything must contain the qualities and substance of all that emanates from it, and at the same time is beyond all such qualitative and quantitative distinctions. This is certainly paradoxical. Yet in Absolute Truth, these attributes are eternal and unchanging, while in relative existence they are temporary and always in a state of flux.

Absolute Truth is often called ‘spiritual,’ in contradistinction to relative material existence. But this label is itself relative since it is defined in terms of relative, material existence. Therefore we use the term Absolute Truth to refer to the eternal source from which everything emanates.

Material science, speculative philosophy and ordinary theology limit their scope of inquiry to varying degrees of relative truth. Only *Vedānta* actually treats the science of Absolute Truth in detail. *Vedānta* is therefore beyond the limitations of the domains of mundane science, philosophy and sectarian theology, for it deals with Absolute Truth on its own level, rather than attempting to extrapolate from relative truth, which of course can only generate more relative truth.

Material science is especially limited in its ability to describe consciousness; since consciousness is an absolute factor, the language of mathematics has no way to quantify it except for zero and infinity. Philosophy and psychology attempt to deal with consciousness indirectly by analyzing it in terms of mental phenomena or systems of morality and ethical values. None of these relative disciplines makes any real attempt to embrace the paradoxes of Absolute Truth, or treat consciousness as a fundamental substance. Therefore anyone who wants to understand consciousness, the most primary and fundamental fact of our existence, must approach Absolute Truth through the study of *Vedānta*.

## Qualifications of the student

*Vedānta* begins from the assumption that the student is in a position to inquire into the domain of Absolute Truth. This does presuppose certain conditions. The student should be intelligent and sincere, well-versed in the literature of ontological inquiry in general, and Vedic lore in particular. He should be moral and ethical in the ordinarily accepted meaning of the terms, and be inclined by nature to goodness, truthfulness and appreciation of the ontological and aesthetic value of Absolute Truth.

The successful aspirant should also possess purity of mind and heart. This means he should be free from the desire for material gain, and have transcended lust, greed, anger, pride, envy and the desire for dominating others. He should be a pure vegetarian, free from intoxication, illicit sexual habits and gambling.

While mundane scholars and theologians scoff at these requirements for purity, they cannot follow them; nor can they properly understand or explain *Vedānta* or Absolute Truth, let alone realize it within themselves. The standards of purity are requisites for spiritual initiation into the Vedic *guru*-disciple lineage, precisely because they prepare one to realize Absolute Truth. In practice, no one can maintain such high standards of purity without the personal instruction of a self-realized soul.

Therefore the most important qualification is that the aspiring student of *Vedānta* must be in association with a pure soul who has realized Absolute Truth himself, who can initiate and instruct the student by example in the practices and lifestyle required to realize Absolute Truth. Since such realization requires complete concentration of purpose and energy, one must be ready to renounce all activities motivated by relative gain and material enjoyment, and devote oneself fully to *Vedānta* for the duration of the apprenticeship.

The student must understand that working in the relative conception of life, including study of religious literature, and even ordinary academic or theological study of *Vedānta*, will not lead him to the desired goal of self-realization and unlimited happiness attainable through proper study of *Vedānta*. In fact, without the esoteric practices of the Absolute Truth, no one can realize *Vedānta*. The *Vedānta* philosophy only provides a transcendental contextual framework in which to hold and evaluate the experiences of direct practice of Absolute Truth.

The esoteric school of the teacher of *Vedānta* is an extension of Absolute Truth in the relative material world. It partakes of the absolute qualities of Absolute Truth, but these qualities are only reflected, not innate. The school of *Vedānta* is the form; Absolute Truth is the essence. Without the essence, the form is useless. Without the self-realized teacher, the school is simply another relative manifestation, for the teacher is the representative of Absolute Truth. The student must be careful not to confuse the form with the essence. The great value of association with a self-realized soul is described in the following statement of *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.34]:

*tad viddhi pranīpātena paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”

The student’s association with the teacher may be in person, or it may be through a more advanced student, or even through a medium such as a recording or a book. The potency of Absolute Truth is such that it may be transmitted through any medium without change. The important thing is the degree of realization of the teacher, since the student cannot attain any realization beyond that of his teacher.

While the qualifications for successful study of *Vedānta* may seem daunting, they are easily acquired by one who chants the Holy Name of the Lord:

*japyenaiva ca saṁsiddhyad  
brahmaṇā nātra saṁśayaḥ  
kuryād anyan na vā kuryān  
maitro brāhmaṇa ucyate*

“Whether he performs other rituals and duties or not, one who perfectly chants *mantras* glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered a perfect *brāhmaṇa*, eligible to understand the Supreme Lord.” [*Manu-saṁhitā* 2.87]

*yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād  
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit  
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate  
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt*

“To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face-to-face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.6]

For a detailed explanation of the potency of the Holy Name, please see the [Preface to our book \*Śrī Visnusahasranāma\*](#).

## Transcendental knowledge

The motivation of the student of *Vedānta* is crucial to proper understanding. Generally, three kinds of persons inquire into Absolute Truth: those who have performed all kinds of religious duties faithfully, and have come to realize the limitations of institutionalized religion and ritualized spiritual practices; those who compassionately desire the greatest benefit for all living beings; and those who have tasted the bliss of meditation and want to completely renounce the activities of this world to attain full self-realization of Absolute Truth.

People who have performed all kinds of religious rituals and duties gradually come to understand that beyond the rote performance of canonical ritual, there is an inexpressible essence of Absolute Truth. Nevertheless they also experience the inability of such practices to grant more than a hint of this Truth. Therefore they embark on a search for a higher esoteric teaching, and if they are sincere, are awarded the opportunity to inquire into Absolute Truth from a realized teacher.

Those who are involved in teaching, counseling, healing, philanthropy and other forms of welfare work gradually come to understand the limitations of such relative assistance. It is said that one can give a hungry man food, and that will satisfy him today. But teach him to cook, and that will satisfy him for life. Similarly, those who perform relative welfare can see that they cannot provide permanent relief from suffering in that way. Therefore they begin to inquire into Absolute Truth to find a permanent solution to the problems of life, both for themselves and others.

Fortunate people who have attempted to experience Absolute Truth through meditation may also come to understand that without proper guidance and a rich fund of transcendental knowledge, they can make but little progress. Their hit-and-miss experiences of meditation have convinced them that there is a higher reality, but they also realize their own inability to attain steady and complete realization of it.

Therefore they also begin the search for a qualified teacher to initiate them into the mysteries of Absolute Truth.

These three kinds of students indirectly understand the nature of Absolute Truth according to their own respective abilities. By their independent efforts they eventually become purified enough to attain the association of a self-realized teacher. Once they enter the esoteric school of the teacher, they can continue to make progress until they have attained full realization of Absolute Truth, and their quest is successful.

These three types of aspirants hold in common the experience that relative methods of approaching Absolute Truth are doomed to failure. While many methods of enhancing knowledge and mitigating suffering exist in the relative world, all of them are limited and temporary. All beings existentially crave the full degree of self-realization; but material welfare work, conventional religious piety and even meditation cannot provide it without transcendental knowledge, initiation into the living tradition of *Vedānta* and the personal guidance of a self-realized soul. For they do not contain the most nourishing food of Absolute Truth.

Therefore the practical study of *Vedānta* begins from transcendental knowledge. The first item of transcendental knowledge is that insufficient relative methods provide only limited and temporary results, and to obtain the perfection of Absolute Truth requires methods that are directly absolute. Therefore one should fill his intelligence with the transcendental knowledge described by the absolute nomenclature of *Vedānta*. We will discuss this point very elaborately in later sections of this book.

We remind the student again that simply comprehending the difference between the relative and the absolute, and developing the qualifications of a student of *Vedānta* as described above, are insufficient to realize Absolute Truth. However, if one attains the association of a self-realized soul and follows his instructions, then this transcendental realization, ordinarily impossible to attain, becomes easy.

## **Absolute nomenclature**

The most important principle of the philosophy of *Vedānta* is the nomenclature of Absolute Truth. Certain verbal formulas called *mantras* express the transcendental potencies of Absolute Truth, and by being initiated into and practicing these mantras, one can realize the qualities of Absolute Truth within oneself.

It may be difficult for the person educated in the relative conceptions of symbology and semantics to comprehend the idea of an absolute nomenclature. In relative existence, all words and symbols are different from the phenomena they represent. For example, one can repeat the word ‘water’ as much as one likes, but this will not quench his thirst.

In relative consciousness, even terms intended to denote various aspects of Absolute Truth commonly are defined in terms of relative existence, and are therefore actually relative terms. For example, the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* defines God as “(in esp. Christian, Jewish and Muslim belief) the being which made the universe, the Earth and its people and is believed to have an effect on all things.” Note that here God is defined entirely in terms of relative existence, i.e. the material creation.

However, there does exist a class of absolute terminology that has no referent in relative existence whatsoever, and these terms are the nomenclature of Absolute Truth. In keeping with the undifferentiated quality of absolute existence, these terms are nondifferent from the aspects of Absolute Truth they describe. Experience shows that meditating on the transcendental sounds of *mantra* can induce realization of Absolute Truth in properly trained practitioners.

The nomenclature of Absolute Truth is a large subject, to which we have already devoted several books. For the purposes of this discussion, the nomenclature of Absolute Truth may be understood to consist of words that have no relative referent. In later sections we will present and explain many specific examples.

## Brahman, the origin of everything

Absolute Truth is the origin of everything, both in the absolute and relative realms. The creation, maintenance and destruction of the relative world occur completely within the context of the eternal existence of Absolute Truth.

*atha kasmāḍ ucyate brahmeti bṛhanto by asmin guṇāḥ*

“From Whom has this universe become manifest? From Brahman, who possesses an abundance of exalted transcendental qualities.” [*śruti-śāstra*]

Since the entire relative world is an effect, Absolute Truth alone is its cause. The first cause of the relative world cannot be found within the relative existence itself, therefore speculative theories of the origin of the universe attempt to place it in some hypothetical ancient period when conditions were, somehow, different than at present. Nevertheless, matter or energy can never be the cause of itself, since its very existence requires the pre-existence of consciousness, intelligence, space and time, which no theory of the relative realm can explain.

The only explanation for the relative world that makes sense is that it emanates from Absolute Truth, exists within Absolute Truth and is reabsorbed into Absolute Truth at the end. Absolute Truth is described in *Vedānta* philosophy as *bhūma*, all-pervading, and *ātmā*, consciousness or soul. And in the description of Absolute Truth as the source of everything, *Vedānta-sūtra* uses the word *yataḥ*, ‘from Whom.’

*janmādy asya yataḥ*

“[Brahman is] He from Whom everything emanates.” [*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.2]

Therefore in the ultimate issue, Absolute Truth is not only all-pervading, but also conscious and personal. Actually, it is not possible that Absolute Truth is impersonal, because Absolute Truth is the source of everything, including persons. And how can the source of persons be without the quality of personality? Of course, it is quite possible for Absolute Truth to be simultaneously personal and impersonal without any contradiction, and we will explore this paradox more fully in later sections.

Absolute Truth as the transcendental Supreme Person emanates everything, maintains the existence of everything, and reabsorbs everything relative when it becomes unmanifest. As such, Absolute Truth contains all qualities of all manifestations. *Vedānta* philosophy calls the reservoir of all qualities Brahman. In this work we use the term Brahman interchangeably with Absolute Truth.

Brahman also indicates an eternal, conscious, unconditionally existing person. *Vedānta-sūtra* uses the term Brahman to indicate the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We therefore prefer Brahman to the Western theological term ‘God’ because as described above, ‘God’ is defined in terms of the relative existence, whereas Brahman explicitly indicates Absolute Truth without any referent to relative existence.

Brahman or Absolute Truth, then, is the subject matter of *Vedānta*. Regarding the qualities of Brahman, the Vedic literature states:

*yo vai bhūma tat sukhaṁ nānyat sukhaṁ asti bhūmaiva  
sukhaṁ bhūmatveva vijijñāsitavyaḥ*



“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the source of genuine happiness. Nothing else can bring one actual happiness. Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead can bring one happiness. For this reason one should inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.25.1]

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo  
nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi*

“O Maitreyī, one should see, hear, remember, and inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5]

*tam etaṁ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividisanti  
yajñena dānena tapasānaśanena*

“The brāhmaṇas strive to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by Vedic study, sacrifice, charity, austerity, and fasting.” [Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22]

*satyena labhayaś tapasā hy eṣa ātmā samyak  
jñānena brahmacaryeṇa nityam*

“By constant truthfulness, transcendental knowledge and austerity, one becomes eligible to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.5]

Therefore we who are suffering an uncertain existence in the relative world can derive all benefit from inquiring into Brahman or Absolute Truth; for Brahman, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the reservoir of all desirable qualities, up to and including complete independence from the relative existence. These qualities are imbibed through transcendental knowledge of Absolute Truth and the esoteric practice of chanting the Holy Name.

## The process of self-realization

Knowledge is of two kinds: direct and indirect. Direct knowledge is gathered through the senses, and indirect knowledge is obtained from authorities such as the spiritual teacher, and scriptures such as *Vedānta-sūtra* and the *Vedas*. In relative consciousness, we cannot have direct knowledge of Absolute Truth, but we can gain indirect knowledge of Brahman through spiritual authorities.

However, by performing the process to attain Brahman received through the process of indirect knowledge, we uncover our original absolute consciousness and perceive Absolute Truth directly through absolute senses. In this way we come to direct knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and also become cognizant of our real eternal identity in the absolute existence.

For, while the Supreme Personality of Godhead is certainly the Supreme Brahman, the dependent living entities emanated from Him also have the qualities of Brahman such as consciousness, desire, will, perception, action and intelligence. Therefore we are also Brahman, but we are not identical with the Supreme Brahman. Rather, we living beings are subordinate emanations of the Supreme Brahman. Because we are only infinitesimal individual emanations of Brahman, out of ignorance of our real nature our original absolute identity has become covered by relative existence in the form of the temporary material mind and body.

*prthag-ātmānaṁ preritaṁ ca matvā  
juṣṭas tatas tenāmṛtatvam eti*

“When one understands that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit souls are eternally distinct entities, then he may become qualified for liberation, and live eternally in the spiritual world.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.6]

By associating with the qualities of Absolute Truth through the process of transcendental sound vibration, the Holy Name, we can free ourselves from all relative limitations, uncover our original absolute nature and join the Supreme Brahman in eternal existence in the absolute world. This is the aim of *Vedānta* philosophy and the *yoga* practices given in the Vedic literature.

## Quantum Physics and Vedic Metaphysics

Consciousness is the primary issue in human life. Indeed, without consciousness, there *are* no other issues. Consciousness and its corollaries are fundamental to every thought, word and action. Yet how strange it is that no universally accepted, comprehensive theory of consciousness exists in Western science. The reason for this is clear: until recently, science intentionally restricted its domain to empirical investigations of the manifest objective world, while consciousness is intrinsically subjective and immanent.

However, without a practical theory of consciousness, science cannot adequately explain the world in which we live. Consciousness is the most basic experiential fact of existence. Without a theory of consciousness, Quantum Mechanics in particular has nowhere to turn but to mathematical theories of probability and chance to explain observations of subatomic energy transactions. Einstein famously expressed his discomfort with this by saying, “God does not play dice with the Universe.” Quantum Mechanics cannot predict the behavior of a quantum system until a macroscopic conscious entity interferes with it, decohering the indeterminate superposition of the quantum wave function into a definite classical result by the process of measurement and observation.

Clearly, Quantum Mechanics is missing something; just as clearly, what is missing is a workable theory of consciousness. The sometimes bizarre concepts and calculations of quantum theory all depend on the existence and actions of an observer. Any observer must be conscious, and therefore the consciousness of the observer is critical to the outcome of any quantum experiment. However, so far Quantum Mechanics still treats the observer’s consciousness as a ‘black box,’ as if consciousness were proscribed from serious scientific inquiry. Whether this is a consequence of Western science’s origins as a weapon against the intellectual repression of the Church, or because of materialistic empirical bias of theorists and researchers, is not the issue here. The intent of this work is to present and explore an extant theory of consciousness from an ancient tradition of vital, living importance to hundreds of millions of adherents and practitioners all over the world, and to evaluate its potential value to modern science.

## Translating *Vedānta*

With recent developments in Quantum Mechanics and the philosophy of science, the dialogue of Western scientific thought has advanced to the point where its cutting edge exposes many issues equivalent to those discussed in *Vedānta*. Now that this has occurred, the timeless principles of *Vedānta* can be expressed in the technical language of Quantum Mechanics and the philosophy of science, with little or no attenuation of meaning. Quantum physics and *Vedānta* address the same philosophical object: the inconceivable, immeasurable and immanent nature of Absolute Reality, of which the observable phenomenological cosmos is but a tiny subset. The two disciplines approach the subject from widely divergent points of view and use vastly different language to treat it. Nevertheless, the commonality of subject between Western science and *Vedānta* makes it possible to reconcile them without diminishing the importance or subtlety of either. Scientific *Vedānta* is the first attempt to translate the enduring wisdom of *Vedānta* into the new scientific language of Quantum Physics.

The insights of *Vedānta* philosophy and practice provide tremendous theoretical and practical advantages over a strictly Western scientific approach to the mysteries of life and existence. The keys to these advantages are that *Vedānta* recognizes the transcendental nature of consciousness, and the practical ability of directed consciousness to act, in effect, as co-creator of the universe to realize its full potential. Vedāntic consciousness theory provides a workable interface between the individual and the Universal Quantum Wave Function, which contains all possibilities of all possible universes.

Through this interface, one can enter into a direct personal relationship with the Infinite and engage in an eternal, ecstatic dance of mutual reciprocation. Translating the recondite philosophy and practical methods of *Vedānta* into accessible Western scientific language opens profound possibilities of expanded consciousness to millions of scientific-minded people all over the world.

## What is *Vedānta*?

The term *Vedānta* is a compound of *veda* + *anta*. *Veda* can refer to the *Vedas*, the sacred *sanātana-dharma* tradition of Bhārata (India), or in a more general sense it simply means true knowledge. *Anta* means the conclusion or end. So *Vedānta* can be interpreted either literally, as the ultimate conclusion of the voluminous literature of the Vedic tradition; or more figuratively, as the ultimate knowledge, once knowing which, there is nothing further to be known. *Vedānta* appears herein in both meanings, but chiefly in the latter sense. In other words, *Vedānta* is the highest knowledge of the Vedic tradition, exactly as Quantum Mechanics and allied fields are the most advanced subjects in Western science.

While Westerners usually think of *Vedānta* as a religious work, its tone is actually closer to a terse mathematical or scientific analysis. *Vedānta* examines evidence, asserts hypotheses, quotes established authorities both pro and con its thesis, and closely reasons its way to a well-substantiated conclusion. That *Vedānta* is available in the West primarily through religious interpreters has perhaps skewed our evaluation of its relevance to scientific concerns.

Certainly, *Vedānta-sūtra* requires substantial exegesis to be intelligible to those uninitiated in its arcane mysteries. It is essentially the class lecture notes of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, a great teacher of Vedic philosophy about 50 centuries ago in Bhārata (India). Various schools of interpretation exist, muddying the clear original meaning of the work. This is quite unnecessary, since the author himself explains the meaning of *Vedānta-sūtra* elaborately in his epic work *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The following statement of *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, one of the oldest *Purāṇas* (Vedic histories), confirms that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*:

*artho 'yam brahma-sūtrānām*

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

In researching and preparing Scientific Vedanta, we made extensive reference to the *Govinda-bhāṣya* of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a great author and interpreter of Vedic works, well situated in the direct lineage of both *Vedānta-sūtra* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

## Differing interpretations

*Vedānta* is chiefly known in the West as a vehicle for the theory of impersonalism: that the Ultimate Reality is somehow devoid of all qualities, energies and activity, and that self-realization consists of merging one's existence with Brahman. In other words, self-realization equals self-annihilation. However, this interpretation is not supported by *Vedānta-sūtra* itself, or by its author in his commentary. Śrīla Vyāsadeva confirms the personal nature of the Absolute and His potencies in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.7.4-6] in the following words:

*bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male  
apaśyat puruṣam pūrṇam māyām ca tad-apāśrayam*

“Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in directed consciousness [bhakti-yoga] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Brahman along with His external illusory energy, which was under full control.”

*yayā sammohito jīva ātmānam tri-guṇātmakam  
paro 'pi manute 'nartham tat-kṛtam cābhipadyate*

“Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes unwanted reactions of material miseries.”

*anarthopaśamaṁ sakṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje  
lokasyājānato vidvāṁś cakre sātvata-saṁhitām*

“The unwanted material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of directed consciousness. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is in relation to *Vedānta-sūtra*.”

We will also see in our scientific analysis that, in order for the Vedāntic practices of directed consciousness to be effective, one must conceive of a personal interface to the Absolute. Even if the Absolute actually is ultimately impersonal (which is impossible to know because the Absolute is unobservable by definition in both Quantum Mechanics and *Vedānta*), we must relate to the Absolute as a person simply because we are persons. Since all possible qualities and states of existence and energy are contained within the Universal Quantum Wave Function in unlimited potential, this is not a theoretical problem. It is a well-substantiated observation that the impersonal practice of transcendental consciousness is much more difficult, and its followers seldom achieve the success they desire. This very important issue will be discussed elaborately in the text.

## Expressing *Vedānta* in scientific language

Those who approach *Vedānta* from a spiritual or religious viewpoint should not be dismayed by this work. *Vedānta* and Quantum Mechanics describe the same subject—ultimate reality—from two widely divergent points of view. Since the subject in both cases is identical, there is scope to demonstrate many parallels between the two disciplines. While this book is written chiefly for Western readers trained in scientific thought, it is equally valuable to students and teachers of the Vedic tradition, for it shows how the timeless Vedic tradition remains relevant, and easily can be expressed in terms of contemporary scientific concepts or any sufficiently sophisticated frame of reference.

My Vedic guru Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda often spoke of *Vedānta* as a great science, global in scale and application, and encouraged his students to speak and write about it to the scientific community. He wrote, “*Vedānta* is the medium of philosophical interpretations, and thus *Vedānta* cannot be the absolute property of any particular class of philosopher. A sincere seeker of the Absolute Truth is called a Vedantist. *Veda* means ‘knowledge.’ Any department of knowledge is a part of Vedic knowledge, and *Vedānta* means the ultimate conclusion of all branches of knowledge. As philosophy is called the science of all sciences, *Vedānta* is the ultimate philosophy of all philosophical speculations.” He would be delighted to see this work, as would his predecessor Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who wrote the inspired *Govinda-bhāṣya Vedānta* commentary on which much of this book is based.

Mysticism generally is troublesome to the Western mind, which makes great efforts to avoid it. However, the findings of Quantum Mechanics, and philosophical theories such as the Anthropic Principle, highlight the central role of consciousness in the human existential situation, opening the door to a constructive dialogue between Eastern and Western modes of thought. This book is not meant to be the last word on the subject, and the future contributions of thoughtful and intelligent readers—from both Vedic and scientific perspectives—will certainly enrich the dialogue begun here.

## Terminology and definitions

In view of the many parallels between *Vedānta* and Quantum Mechanics, we find many pairs of terms with equivalent meanings. We consider these terms synonyms, and use them as appropriate to the context. That is, when explaining Vedāntic texts we generally use the Vedic terms, and when discussing parallel scientific issues we use Western terms. The following table lists the principal synonymous terms used in this work (additional technical terms and definitions are listed in the Glossary):

Vedic Term	Scientific Term	Functional Definition
<i>Satyam param</i>	Absolute, Absolute Truth	The unconditioned, infinite, immanent and unknowable source and context of everything; the ground against which everything exists, is measured, and finds its destiny.
<i>Avatāra</i>	Personification of the Absolute	A terminal self-manifested by the Universal Quantum Wave Function to facilitate communication with humans.
<i>Brahman</i>	Universal Quantum Wave Function	The unobservable, immanent, immeasurably potent origin and reservoir of all possibilities, energies, space-time continua, universes, beings, consciousness etc. (See Absolute)
<i>Ātmā</i>	Conscious individual living entity	A fundamental atomic particle of consciousness found in all living bodies; the individual person or soul.
<i>Dhyāna</i>	Directed consciousness	The science and art of concentrating the attention, mind and consciousness on a single transcendental object.
<i>Paramātmā</i>	Superconscious individual living entity	The all-pervading, all-cognizant form of Brahman, the sum total of all consciousness.
<i>Bhagavān</i>	Personality of Brahman	The personal form of Brahman preferred by the practicing Vedantist to communicate with, and influence the decoherence of, the Universal Quantum Wave Function. (see <i>Avatāra</i> )
<i>Sūtra</i>	Aphorism	A short, telegraphic statement implying a much larger context and significance.

## The problem of existence

One day we awaken to find that we are born into a strange and often uncomfortable world. If we desired or asked to take birth here, we certainly don't remember doing so. A few of us are born into relatively benign circumstances, while most have to cope with difficulty and privation from the start. In any event, as soon as we are able, we begin to develop theories about why life is the way it is. Theories are useful because they often give us insights into how to make our lives better. They also reassure us

that we have some small measure of control over our existence, and give us hope that we can make our future better than our past.

While our research and inquiries enrich us with insight and help us explain the world to ourselves, they also force us to confront the stark limits of our ability to control our fate. No one can avoid being born, growing old, or dying. We are thrust into this world without our consent, forced by circumstances to participate in various activities and struggle for survival, watch helplessly as the years pass by, our body withers and sickens, and at last we go the way of our ancestors into death.

Our precious knowledge and security are surrounded on all sides by impenetrable mysteries: Where did this astonishing universe come from? How is it constructed and maintained? Why the amazing variety and complexity of life? Is there life on other planets? What are time, life and consciousness, and why do we have to die? What will happen in the future? We know a little about these things, but the explanations we have are incomplete and unsatisfying, because they seem little help in controlling our fate.

Nevertheless, the insoluble problems of life drive us to perfect our knowledge, even against seemingly insuperable odds, and we have had some small success in doing so. We can point to our success in economic development and technology, our knowledge of the atom and the universe, global travel by jet planes, ever-faster computers and genuinely useful software, instant worldwide communications and so on. These rewards are enough to encourage us to continue to invest substantial human time and energy in scientific research and technological development, including theoretical and philosophical speculations that may not be immediately useful, but whose value we may realize in some future we cannot yet glimpse.

In fact, our collective wisdom places great value on ideas and concepts: “The pen is mightier than the sword.” For we have seen how concepts that seem far out or impossible today often become harbingers of great power and prosperity when their time finally arrives. The gleam in some visionary theorist’s eye may become tomorrow’s better energy source or gigantic global industry. These visions of the future encourage us to stay the course of progress, and advance the cause of understanding toward a future of greater knowledge and felicity.

Emboldened by success, every so often scientists try to tackle the really big questions of life: Where do we come from? What is life? How did it begin? How did the universe come into existence? Why is the universe designed the way it is? What is consciousness and what role does it play in the physical world? Scientific method’s insistence on empirical proof for any theory means that these kinds of questions will always be more philosophical than scientific in the strictest interpretation of the terms. However, that will not stop people from asking them; it just makes us less certain of the answers we have for them.

However, it is much harder to prove a theory than to disprove it. In scientific method, a single observation or experimental result can falsify an existing theory and spark the search for a new and better explanation of the facts. Through many iterations, this scientific method of observation, hypothesis, prediction and experimentation results in constantly improving theories and resulting applications.

There is a certain amount of faith involved in accepting any theory that cannot be conclusively demonstrated by experiment. Barring the invention of time travel, theories of the origin of the universe, of life or of the human species must remain just intriguing possibilities. However, even an unproven theory can have an important role as a catalyst for innovation. A new theory that lets us see familiar phenomena in fresh ways can open previously inaccessible possibilities in engineering or applied science, even if the theory is unconfirmed or unprovable. So even unprovable theories can be profitable by expanding our conception of what is possible.

The reader should approach Scientific Vedanta with this mindset. Experienced practitioners of *Vedānta* assert that the proof of its theories of consciousness and reality is in the experience of its practice. This may well be, but not every reader will have the time or inclination to personally test and confirm them. Those who do will be better served by taking the traditional path of initiation and discipleship. Then the best value of this work may be to convince the scientific reader that *Vedānta* is more than philosophy or mythology: the authors and practitioners of the Vedāntic tradition have experienced something subjective and intuitive, though real, that can profoundly expand our knowledge of the world of consciousness, and more accurately map its relation to physical reality and our understanding of the design of the universe.

## **The Theory of Everything**

According to the ‘many worlds’ interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, all possible states and outcomes of the Universal Quantum Wave Function have equal probabilities of existence. Thus by the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, there are a very large—possibly infinite—number of worlds, all slightly different, coexisting simultaneously in the same possibility space. Following Schrödinger’s famous paradox, the many possible worlds are reduced to one actual world by quantum decoherence when viewed by a conscious observer.

According to the Strong Anthropic Principle, we observe the universe as it is because it is the only universe that can produce us exactly the way we are. If the structure and parameters of the universe were substantially different, we human beings would not exist to observe it. It follows, by the Self-Selection Assumption, that of all possible universes, we live in the one best suited to our needs. If it seems that the parameters of this universe are fine-tuned to the needs of human beings, it is precisely because the nature of our senses and consciousness decrees that we will bring exactly that kind of universe into manifestation from the ‘quantum soup’ of all possible manifestations of the primordial Universal Quantum Wave Function.

The role of consciousness is thus central and pivotal. We see how observers in every field tend to emphasize data that confirms their expectations, and ignore data that contradicts them. Anyone who has sat through a morning in court can understand that no two witnesses see an event in the same way. Each conscious observer gets the universe that he or she creates by causing the decoherence of the indeterminate Quantum Wave Function of all possible worlds by contacting, observing and measuring it with the mind and senses. If the universe we observe seems tailor-made for us, it is because the universe we observe is the one that we bring out of the universal wave function by our very nature and state of consciousness.

Consciousness is absolute, thus each conscious observer observes himself or herself at the center of the universe, and tends to interpret everything in the observed universe in relation to, or in terms of, the meaning it acquires for that observer. This is why consciousness is not an observable in the empirical universe—it has to be outside the universe because it selects the observed universe from the infinitude of possible universes contained in the Universal Quantum Wave Function.

## **The immanence of Absolute Reality**

We see that all comprehensive theories of reality, both religious and scientific, require the existence of an unobservable factor. *Vedānta* has Brahman, and Western science has the Universal Quantum Wave Function. This common unobservable factor is due to the certainty that limited human consciousness is incapable of universal awareness. Indeed, another common factor of all-embracing theories is the quest for simplicity; as Einstein said, “[Theories] should be made as simple as possible—but no simpler.”



The unobservable factor is also an artifact of all ontological and semantic systems, since they all rest on certain assumptions that are unprovable because they are outside the domain of the system.

Even a relatively small amount of information—the contents of the telephone directory, for example—overwhelms the human mind. In this age of the Internet, we suffer from information overload and complain of email burnout. Even if we had immediate access to all the information in the universe, there is no way we could assimilate it. We must accept that the capacity of the human mind and consciousness is finite and limited.

Yet we still desire to know all about life, the world and everything, because we intuitively understand that it will improve our life to do so. This intuition and the resulting thirst for knowledge constantly drives us to learn everything we can about the questions that interest us. If we find that knowing everything is impossible, then we look for a theory that packages an equivalent understanding into a symbolic form that we can digest. Thus cosmological theory becomes the ontological background, the set of unprovable assumptions against which we perceive and evaluate the foreground of our everyday experiences and actions.

Some early and largely inadequate theories of the cosmos invoke an all-powerful God or Goddess to explain away the vast excess of information and complexity embodied by the real world. Later theories call upon unknown, but mechanical natural laws; still later ones blame chance for inexplicable observations. All these are simply different names for an unknown, unobservable and unknowable infinite reality that transcends our limited ability to perceive, process and understand information.

The great value of *Vedānta* philosophy is that it also posits an immanent, unobservable Absolute Reality—Brahman—but also asserts that it is possible to establish a channel of communication with Brahman. *Vedānta* refers to ancient histories, the *Purāṇas*, that recount occasions when Brahman chose to appear as a person, the better to communicate with humans. These personifications of Brahman are communication terminals called *avatāras* that make it possible to communicate with Brahman directly, even today. A vast assortment of mental disciplines, collectively known as *yoga* (linking) details the practice of transcendental communication with the immanent Brahman, or the Universal Quantum Wave Function.

Someone may object, “Come now. How is it possible to communicate with the Universal Quantum Wave Function? Even if it were possible, certainly some scientists would have noticed by now.” I reply: “We are constantly immersed in, and penetrated by, the Universal Quantum Wave Function. Can a fish communicate with the ocean? A better question might be to ask, ‘How is it possible that anyone could avoid communication with the Universal Quantum Wave Function?’ ”

When the Universal Quantum Wave Function is posited as an unobservable, that means although it is an objective, empirically accessible phenomenon, it is simply, by definition, outside of our semantic and ontological framework. The only obstacle to our interacting with it in a subjective framework is our own disbelief that such a thing is possible. If our mental constructs and the semantic structures of our theories do not allow us to conceive of such a possibility, then we will not be aware of it even if it is going on all around us all the time. For example, no one was aware of cosmic rays, even though they penetrate us constantly, until 1912 when Victor Hess noticed certain anomalous behavior in the discharge of an electroscope, and took the trouble to hypothesize their existence and search for them.

Thus belief in the existence of a possibility is often prerequisite to realizing it. For example, if I do not believe that I can learn French, no one can teach it to me with any amount of time and effort. In fact, we interact with the Universal Quantum Wave Function at all times; *Vedānta* simply provides a theoretical framework that allows us to observe this interaction, albeit subjectively. We request the reader to keep an open mind on this point.

It is easy to lose sight of the fact that theories are metaphors. For example, electrons exhibit wave behavior under certain circumstances, and particle behaviors under other circumstances. This does not mean that electrons are either waves or particles, but that their behavior can be described by equations similar to those describing waves and particles. We do not have to believe that electrons are waves or particles to use the wave or particle equations to calculate their behavior. Wave-like behavior and particle-like behavior are both simply metaphors that help us predict the behavior of electrons. Similarly, we do not have to believe that the Universal Quantum Wave Function is a person to use the theories of *Vedānta* as metaphors to understand, design experiments or predict its behavior as a person. We can use any theory or metaphor to advantage, simply by suspending our disbelief in it long enough to understand and apply it properly.

The tremendous advantage of the Vedāntic theory of communication with Brahman is that through this relationship we can directly influence the local decoherence of the Universal Quantum Wave Function in much more powerful ways. This makes it possible to address certain classes of formerly inaccessible and insoluble problems, such as the purpose of existence, the directed evolution of consciousness, the mechanism of intuition, the condition and destination of consciousness after death, the mechanism of the Anthropic Principle and many others. The potential power of the new theoretical possibilities opened by *Vedānta*—whether immediately experimentally verifiable or not—alone makes its theory a worthwhile field for scientific study. The purpose of this work is to facilitate this study by exploring the connections of *Vedānta* with existing scientific theory.

## **The role of consciousness**

Consciousness is the central fact of existence. The attempt of materialistic science to restrict the domain of human inquiry to so-called 'objective' phenomena is more or less a cheating process, since without consciousness all observations, and thus the process of empiricism itself, are impossible. Just as consciousness is a precondition of empirical investigation, so is an ontology or semantic domain. Reductionism has tried to eliminate subjectivity from the domain of scientific semantics, although the symbology of mathematics and the philosophy of science, concepts of truth and untruth, logical proof and so on are highly subjective.

Every working scientist or philosopher, if he is honest, will have to admit that the actual process of scientific advancement occurs in intuitive leaps that transcend the dry process of formal logic. Solutions to intractable problems, such as James Watson's discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA, often come in dreams or intuitive visions. Many great scientists have had luminous moment of transcendent insight, such as Albert Hoffman's youthful vision of the interconnectedness of nature, consciousness and God.

Consciousness itself is transcendental, immanent and subjective, therefore being conscious is itself a spiritual experience. But because most of us subscribe to a materialistic explanation of the world and phenomena, we miss this profound dimension of our own experience because of a crippled ontological background. Thus the quality of our consciousness, and thus the quality of our experience of life, is predicated on our ontological commitment, because in general, people do not see what they do not acknowledge to exist.

A famous historical example of this was when the first colonists arrived in what is now the United States, the local inhabitants literally could not see their sailing ships moored just off the coast, because after all, sailing across the ocean on a rickety bucket made of fragile wood is impossible. In a related and even more tragic example, the entire Incan army, hundreds of thousands of men, were defeated by a few hundred Spanish cavalry at Mexico City because the Incans had never before seen mounted soldiers. Thus they regarded them as undefeatable divine manifestations, panicked and fled.

Similarly, although we are used to magical appliances such as television and computers, we cannot understand the immense possibilities of our own consciousness simply because our world view, whether by accident or design, excludes subjectivity from the domain of reality. Many people even deny that consciousness exists except as an epiphenomenon of brain electrochemistry. Thus they denigrate the most important and vital part of their own self to the status of an illusion, focusing obsessively on the material body as the only reality.

We refuse to accept such a crippling view. Our own experience confirms that consciousness can change, and that the quality of our consciousness determines the quality of our experience of life. Real happiness or fulfillment is impossible in the limited, conditional consciousness provided by the reductionistic ontology; to attain the optimum state of being and full enjoyment of life requires full acceptance of our qualitative identity with Brahman, the transcendental source of all energies. Changing our consciousness requires opening our minds to the higher, more abstract and inclusive ontology derived from Vedic sources. When we accept this Vedantic ontology and begin to work with it, our empirical investigations take on a new dimension, the dimension of transcendental consciousness. This changes everything, because it changes how we look at the world and ourselves.

## Changing consciousness

Changing our consciousness requires, first of all, accepting that it is possible. The next necessity is knowledge of consciousness: the characteristics, qualities, functions and potential of individual consciousness within the context of consciousness in general. Then we need practical methods of changing our consciousness in predictable, beneficial ways. Finally there must be some stable criterion of the optimal state of consciousness to serve as a goal. All this and more is provided by the *Vedānta* philosophy and ancillary works.

The methodology for changing our consciousness is also given in the literature of *Vedānta*: it is constant engagement of the attention and awareness in subjects of transcendental quality. Constantly hearing, repeating, remembering and serving the *Vedānta* philosophy itself and the sacred subjects in relation to it is the prime methodology for advancing in the transcendental science. Therefore *Vedānta* is supremely self-referential, another quality that we would expect from a truly transcendental science; it does not require any knowledge outside of itself for its complete implementation and realization.

But actually changing our consciousness requires more than just theoretical knowledge, belief in an alternate Vedic cosmology or even a transcendental methodology; it also requires personal discipline and training by an experienced teacher who has already made the journey from conditioned to absolute consciousness, and can impart guidance from his own experience. This practical apprenticeship is commonly accepted as a requirement for professional performance in many less demanding fields, for example medicine, law or even blacksmithing; how much more it must be true in the esoteric realm of consciousness enhancement.

Yet we see that most ostensible students of transcendental philosophy and *Vedānta* remain unwilling to take this final and actually, most important step. But it is precisely this total commitment that distinguishes the armchair speculator from the successful aspirant. It is a consistent observation over many years' experience that those who are unwilling to give up their so-called independence and subject themselves to the discipline of a Master are unable to make any tangible advancement in the actual science of *Vedānta*.

## Conclusion

To properly understand the profound subject of *Vedānta*, then, requires a paradigmatic shift from the context of reductionistic materialism to that of Vedic transcendentalism. Otherwise accurate understanding and complete realization of the profound benefits of *Vedānta* will remain elusive. Any treatise, no matter how extensive, is only words. In and of itself, it cannot change our consciousness or lead to liberation from the existential suffering of material existence. We can describe the qualities and characteristics of *Vedānta* from now to the end of the universe; but unless one puts its principles and methods into practice in his life, he cannot taste the results. Certainly, knowledge and study are required; but so are good character and integrity. The glib student who recites his lessons perfectly but cannot apply them in practice will not find favor in the esoteric school of *Vedānta*.

*Vedānta* is a laboratory science, but the laboratory is our own mind and consciousness. Those who make superficial external changes in their lives, but who remain fixed in materialistic viewpoints will find little success, as will those whose studies remain theoretical and cannot bring themselves to practice. Each *sūtra*, each item of the doctrine of *Vedānta* has a corresponding practice and realization. So considering these caveats, anyone who applies themselves well to the discipleship of *Vedānta* can make significant progress in mitigating the sufferings of life.

# Śrī Vedānta-sūtra

## Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman

**Pāda 1: Words which, taken by themselves, would not necessarily refer to Brahman, but in the Vedic context certainly refer to Brahman.**

### Adhikaraṇa 1: Inquiry into the Absolute

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The first Adhikaraṇa or Vedic syllogism of *Vedānta* begins the inquiry into the Absolute [Brahman or the Universal Quantum Wave Function]. Everyone should inquire very seriously about the Absolute. Why? Because knowledge of the Absolute—the science of consciousness and spiritual life—is the only source of unconditional happiness. There is no other means to obtain perfect, uninterrupted, endless happiness, because consciousness is the fundamental existential fact of life.

This statement is confirmed by the following statements of Vedic scripture:

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi*

“O Maitreyī, one should see, hear, remember, and inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.5]

*yo vai bhūma tat sukhaṁ nānyat sukhaṁ asti bhūmaiva sukhaṁ bhūmatveva vijijñāsitavyaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead (*bhūma*) is the source of genuine happiness. Nothing else can bring one actual happiness. Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead can bring one happiness. For this reason one should inquire about the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.25.1]

Such exalted happiness is possible only through understanding and practicing the recondite truths of *Vedānta* in regard to one’s personal relationship with the Absolute. Because without happiness life is not worth living, one should inquire extensively about the Absolute until one reaches a conclusive practical understanding. In other words, one should dedicate a significant portion of one’s time and resources to inquiring about the science of consciousness and practicing this transcendental knowledge until one attains self-realization, the source of unlimited happiness. This will bring the greatest satisfaction obtainable in human life.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Students of religion and science often think that they have no need to inquire about the Absolute or investigate the esoteric teachings of the *Vedas*.

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: “The ordinary pleasures of material existence and the intellectual rewards of the pursuit of ordinary learning are enough,” materialistic people say. “There is no need to waste our time with abstruse philosophical matters, which are like a dream.” Others say, “We are satisfied with the opulences of morality and prosperity attained by the ritualistic functions of religion. What need do we have for this mysticism? Who knows, it may be irreligion in disguise. There are even statements in the *Vedas* that seem to contradict the necessity of inquiry into Brahman and advocate other spiritual processes.

*apāma somam amṛtā abhūma*

“We have attained immortality by drinking the *soma* juice.” [*Rg Veda* 8.18.3]

*akṣayyam ha vai cāturmāsyaājinaḥ sukṛtaṁ bhavati*

“They who follow the vow of *cāturmāsya* attain an eternal reward.”

“These texts indicate that one can attain spiritual perfection by performing religious ceremonies and rituals and consuming their sacramental remnants [*soma* juice], or by performing austerities during the four months of the rainy season [*cāturmāsya*]. Thus there is no need specifically to inquire into Brahman.”

Such conventional materialistic people think that there is no need to inquire into the Absolute. They think that anyone can enjoy life with full satisfaction by enthusiastic engagement in material work; and if one has any interest in spiritual things, simply by discharging ordinary pious duties described in various religious scriptures, one can attain immortality and an eternal reward. There is no doubt that cultivation of knowledge and performance of the pious duties given in various religious scriptures leads to favorable results. However, Adhyāya 3 of *Vedānta-sūtra*, along with many other passages in the Vedic scriptures, describe in detail the ultimate uselessness of the temporary benefits obtained by material work and religious piety.

Materialists may criticize Vedic culture and religion, but the conclusive truths revealed to the sincere student of *Vedānta* are outside of their experience. If they were to inquire even superficially into the Vedic teachings, they would be able to understand the difference between the temporary results of material fruitive activities and the eternal results of the authentic Vedic spiritual path. Material and transcendental activities, and their respective results, are in completely different ontological categories.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: One who is in knowledge of the Absolute, and thus personally familiar with the incomparable benefits of practicing this transcendental knowledge, feels that he has attained the highest benefit possible in human existence. Out of a genuine desire to help, he endeavors to convince others to inquire into the truths of the Absolute for their own benefit. Therefore, in the very first *sūtra* of *Vedānta*, the author Bhagavān Vyāsadeva encourages the student:

### **Sūtra 1.1.1**

*athāto brahma-jijñāsā*

*athā*—now; *ataḥ*—therefore; *brahma*—about Brahman; *jijñāsā*—there should be desire to inquire.

**Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Absolute.**

*Athā* [now]: This word indicates the conditions that apply to inquiry into the Absolute. Inquiring into the Absolute, although open to everyone, does have a number of prerequisites. When one has properly studied both material science and ordinary religion, understood their meanings and successfully applied their principles, observed ethical practices of truthfulness, nonviolence and other good moral qualities, purified one’s mind and heart through prayer, *mantras* and other spiritual exercises, enjoyed the prosperity and material happiness resulting from virtuous activities, and still remains unsatisfied, one is a fit candidate for inquiring into the Absolute. As soon as such a person attains the association of a self-realized person, he or she becomes qualified to study *Vedānta* and inquire about the Absolute. It is best if the student associates with an enlightened person personally, but one may also obtain such association indirectly through a book or other information medium on the subject of knowledge of the Absolute.

Also, ‘now’ refers to the present time, when the depth and scope of scientific investigation has brought it face-to-face with the same issues discussed in *Vedānta*, namely the science of consciousness and the Absolute, which science terms the Universal Quantum Wave Function. Consciousness has become an inescapable obstacle to the progress of empirical science, because consciousness cannot be weighed

nor measured, nor observed with certainty in anyone but oneself. The ineluctably subjective nature of consciousness means that it is not amenable to conventional objective empirical methods of scientific exploration.

Nevertheless, the role of consciousness in Quantum Mechanics is crucial; for as Schrödinger found, without exact knowledge of consciousness it is impossible to predict the outcome of any quantum transformation with better than probabilistic accuracy. The actual quantum state remains a mystery until decoherence of the Quantum Wave Function occurs when a conscious entity interferes with it by measuring a quantum phenomenon, either with the bodily senses or a technological extension of those senses. Thus it is impossible to understand the ontological implications and actual mechanism of quantum decoherence without extensive, detailed and deep knowledge of consciousness. In addition, Quantum Mechanics has no clear information on the Universal Quantum Wave Function itself, because like consciousness, it is empirically unobservable and therefore immeasurable by definition, being outside the ontological domain of manifested objective existence. Science knows of its existence and can estimate its properties only by mathematical inference.

However, any sane and thoughtful person can immediately observe that he is conscious, and that consciousness has many subtle qualities. There is a definite cause-and-effect relationship between the quality of our consciousness and the quality of our experience in life. However, Western materialistic science refuses to accept evidence from subjective sources, therefore it has no robust theory or accurate functional model of consciousness. This is a great weakness, because of the central importance of consciousness to everyday experience. The scientific theory of consciousness is the specific contribution and importance of *Vedānta*. *Vedānta* provides a detailed theory of consciousness that is completely compatible with Quantum Physics.

*Vedānta* philosophy and practice provide an ideal experimental model and ontological platform for experiential exploration of the subjective mysteries of consciousness and the Absolute. The motivation for writing this work on *Vedānta* came from realizing the potential of Vedāntic model to deepen our understanding of the profound mysteries of consciousness and the Universal Quantum Wave Function. We have extracted this model from the original Vedic sources, formalized it using international standards for formal ontological notation, and explained it in our writings on [Transcendental Ontology](#).

*Atah* [therefore]: Material work and religious piety bring results of material happiness. Because material happiness is based on the material bodily senses, it is inevitably imperfect, limited and temporary. It is imperfect because material happiness is always mixed with distress; it is limited because no matter how much happiness we enjoy, we always desire more; it is temporary because everything that has a beginning has an end: the vehicles of material happiness, the material body and senses, as well as the experience of happiness itself, are subject to termination. These are existential limits brought about by the very nature of material existence.

Nevertheless everyone desires perfect, unlimited and unending happiness. Direct knowledge of the Absolute, realized by proper practice of directed consciousness as described in *Vedānta* and other Vedic works based upon it, is full of imperishable, limitless transcendental knowledge, eternity, bliss, and all transcendental qualities and attributes. Direct contemplation of the Absolute brings eternal bliss to the beholder. Therefore, instead of spending one's entire time and energy pursuing temporary material sense gratification, one who wants substantial, permanent happiness should set aside a substantial amount of time and resources to inquire about the Absolute by studying and practicing the truths of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

At this point, someone may object: "Simply by studying material science, one attains knowledge of everything worth knowing. What is the use of slogging through this hoary old myth? What is the value of mysticism? What if, as a result of studying this knowledge, one abandons the reliable traditional

path of religious piety and fruitive work, and instead takes to the practice of meditation and a lifestyle of simplicity and renunciation? This seems very risky. If we can obtain happiness simply by ordinary religion and material work, what need is there to give it up and study the arcane theories of *Vedānta-sūtra*?”

To this objection I reply: “Even if one carefully studies all the scientific literature and religious scriptures of the world, nowhere will one encounter a complete, practical theory of consciousness except in *Vedānta-sūtra* and allied literature. Without this knowledge, misunderstanding and doubt will lead us away from the complete exercise of the power of enjoyment inherent in our consciousness. Because of this lack of transcendental knowledge, one’s actions and their results will default to the conventional material platform, which, as we have already pointed out, is temporary and limited. Thus in order to attain the unconditional, unending happiness we all desire, it is necessary to study *Vedānta-sūtra* and other Vedic works of transcendental knowledge to strengthen our understanding of consciousness and gain full practical application of its natural but latent spiritual powers.”

This is not to say that the study of *Vedānta* is for everyone. In fact, it is a great and rare privilege reserved for the most astutely intelligent and morally advanced human beings. *Vedānta* does not argue against ordinary material science and religion, but complements and extends them into the realm of transcendental knowledge of the Absolute. Material knowledge and skill is necessary for earning our livelihood and maintaining our existence. Performing the moral duties of religion helps to purify the heart, and ordinary religious faith provides a preliminary platform for approaching transcendental reality. The glorification of the Supreme as part of the practices of any religion helps qualify religious people to comprehend the Absolute. Similarly, study of mathematics, logic, philosophy, scientific theory and the rigor of scientific method provide a disciplined framework and valuable background experience for the study of transcendental knowledge. For although it builds on the statements of the transcendental scriptures, *Vedānta* philosophy encourages—and in the higher stages, requires—individual exploration, critical analysis and practical applications. Any pious and intelligent person who rigorously applies scientific method to the study and practice of *Vedānta* will attain its profound rewards very quickly.

Association with people who understand and practice this transcendental knowledge is a vital factor in apprehending the truth of *Vedānta*. In the long history of the esoteric teachings of *Vedānta*, almost all successful aspirants initially attain interest to inquire about the Absolute from personal association with a self-realized person. By constant practice of the principles of *Vedānta* in that association, they quickly became eligible to cognize the Absolute for themselves. Advanced Vedāntists, being free from envy and competitiveness, gladly help students attain self-realization through their personal association. Thus, any contact with a self-realized person is extremely valuable. If one somehow gets the great good fortune of personal association with a person who knows the complete science of individual consciousness and its relation to the Absolute, just try to learn *Vedānta* by humbly approaching him as a student. *Bhagavad-gītā* states:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena  
paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānam  
jñāninas tattva-darśinah*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34]

Certainly the student must have a broad background in conventional religious and scientific knowledge, and some practical experience in life. This will convince an intelligent person that these



traditional sources of knowledge are incomplete, and that when doubts arise, he does not have sufficient personal realization of spiritual consciousness to adequately counteract them. Thus one with a conventional religious background will inevitably experience a crisis in faith. Study of the transcendental arguments and logic of *Vedānta-sūtra* is necessary to expose all possible doubts and strengthen the student's faith, so he may proceed to realize these spiritual truths for himself.

The ordinary duties of religion are necessary prerequisites, but they are not sufficient to bring the student to complete realization of Brahman. The usefulness of the brahminical duties such as truthfulness, austerity, and *mantra* chanting is described in the following scriptural statements:

*tam etaṁ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividisanti yajñena dānena tapasānaśanena*

“By Vedic study, sacrifice, charity, austerity, and fasting, the *brāhmaṇas* strive to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22]

The above quote states that they strive, but does not indicate that they reach the understanding they seek by those means. The actual means of attaining transcendental realization of the Supreme will be discussed below.

*satyena labhayaś tapasā hy eṣa ātmā samyak jñānena brahmacaryeṇa nityam*

“By constant truthfulness, austerity, transcendental knowledge, and austerity, one becomes eligible to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.5]

Notice here again, the verse says “one becomes eligible;” it does not say that one attains the association of the Lord by these methods.

*japyenaiva ca saṁsiddhyad  
brahmaṇā nātra saṁśayaḥ  
kuryād anyan na vā kuryān  
maitro brāhmaṇa ucyate*

“Whether he performs other rituals and duties or not, one who perfectly chants *mantras* glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered a perfect *brāhmaṇa*, eligible to understand the Supreme Lord.” [*Manu-saṁhitā* 2.87]

Association with those who understand the truth also brings one transcendental knowledge. By this association Nārada and many other spiritual aspirants attained interest to ask about spiritual life and were finally eligible to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face-to-face. Sanat-kumāra and many other great sages have also helped many devotees by giving their association in this way. The great value of contact with a self-realized soul is described in the following statement of *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.34]:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena  
paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ  
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.”

The material benefits obtained by following the pious rituals of ordinary religion are temporary. This fact is confirmed by the following statement of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.1.3-6]:

*tad yatheha karma-cito lokāḥ kṣiyante evam evāmutra puṇya-cito lokāḥ kṣīyate...*

“By performing good works [*karma*] one is elevated to the celestial material world after death. One is not able to stay there forever, however, but one must lose that position after some time and accept another, less favorable residence. In the same way, by amassing pious credits [*punya*] one may reside in the upper planets. Still, he cannot stay there, but must eventually relinquish his comfortable position there, and accept a less favorable residence somewhere else. One who gives up his body without having realized the Self and his true nature will not be free, wherever he goes. But one who departs from this world after having discovered the Self and realized his true desire, for him there is freedom in all the worlds.”

The following statement of *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.2.12] affirms that only transcendental knowledge will help one approach the Supreme Brahman:

*parīkṣya lokān karma-citān brāhmaṇo  
nirvedam ayan nāsty akṛtaḥ kṛtena  
tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet  
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*

“Seeing that the celestial material planets, which one may obtain by pious work, provide only temporary benefits, in order to understand the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, an intelligent *brāhmaṇa* should humbly approach a bona-fide spiritual master learned in the scriptures and full of faith in the Supreme Lord.”

The material benefits obtained by material work and following the rituals of ordinary religion are all temporary. By having faith and performing good works, one may attain an exalted position in this material world. One may not remain there forever, however, but after some time must lose that position and accept a less favorable one. The rewards of material activities are impermanent, if only because the material body with which one enjoys these rewards is itself subject to decay and death. In contrast to the temporary material benefits obtained even in the celestial material planets, the Supreme Brahman is the reservoir of eternal, limitless bliss. Therefore, material work and piety are inferior to the practice of transcendental knowledge, which provides unconditional enjoyment beyond the deficiencies of the material body and senses. This is confirmed by the following statement of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.1.1]:

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is limitless, eternal, and full of knowledge.”

*ānando brahmeti vyajanāt*

“He then understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of transcendental bliss.”

The Supreme Brahman is eternal, full of knowledge and endowed with all transcendental qualities. This is confirmed by the following statements of *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*:

*na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate  
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate  
parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate  
svā-bhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*

“He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity. There is no difference between His body and His soul. He is absolute. All his senses are transcendental. Any one of His senses can perform the action of any other sense. Therefore, no one is greater than Him or equal to Him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus His deeds are automatically performed as a natural sequence.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8]

*sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam  
sarvendriya-vivarjitam  
asaktam sarva-bhṛc caiva  
nirguṇam guṇa-bhoktr ca*

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all modes of material nature.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.17]

*bhāva-grahyam anidākhyam  
bhāvābhāva-karam śivam  
kāla-sārga-karam devam  
ye vidus te jahus tanum*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the creator and destroyer of the entire material cosmic manifestation. He is supremely auspicious, and He does not possess a material body, for His body is spiritual in all respects. He may be reached and understood only by loving devotional service. Those who thus serve Him and understand Him may become free from having to repeatedly accept various material bodies for continued residence in the material world. They become liberated from this world, and obtain eternal spiritual bodies with which to serve Him.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 5.14]

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead grants eternal transcendental bliss to His devotees is confirmed by the following statement of *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* [1.5]:

*taṁ pīṭha-stham ye tu yajanti dhīrās  
teṣāṁ sukham śāśvataṁ netareṣāṁ*

“The saintly devotees who worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead seated on the throne of the heart attain eternal transcendental bliss. Except for them no others can attain this eternal bliss.”

Since transcendental knowledge of *Vedānta* will help one approach the Absolute and gain these benefits, one should inquire about it immediately from a qualified teacher. Material work, and the faith which one may obtain by pious activities, provide only temporary benefits. In contrast, the Absolute is the reservoir of eternal, limitless consciousness and bliss. As the infinite source and reservoir of consciousness and being, the Absolute is supreme, limitless, eternal, and replete with the fullness of all knowledge and consciousness. Thus in order to understand the science of the Absolute, an intelligent person should humbly approach a bona fide teacher learned in *Vedānta* who is also experienced in its practical application.

Anyone who even begins to approach the Absolute by proper direction of consciousness experiences that our small individual consciousness can manifest ecstatic bliss and other wonderful qualities simply by the preliminary purification and concentration. When consciousness is liberated from the limitations of the body and mind, and concentrated by one-pointed contemplation on a transcendental object, it automatically manifests transcendental qualities such as compassion, bliss, unconditional love and transcendental knowledge. The Absolute is eternal, full of knowledge and consciousness, and endowed with unlimited wonderful transcendental qualities. The Absolute does not possess material form like a material living entity. There is no difference between the form and the consciousness of the Absolute. There is nothing greater than or equal to the Absolute, which has multifarious and immense potencies. Therefore if our limited consciousness is capable of experiencing causeless happiness simply by contemplation of its own transcendent qualities, the Absolute, the unlimited fount of all consciousness, certainly is full of unlimited transcendental bliss.

According to *Vedānta* philosophy, the Absolute is the original source of all senses, yet has no material senses. The Absolute is detached from everything, although the source and maintainer of everything and all living beings. The Absolute transcends the material universe, and at the same time is the creator and controller of material nature. The Absolute is the creator, maintainer and destroyer of the entire material cosmic manifestation, but is beyond the control of material laws. The Absolute is supremely auspicious, but does not possess a material body, for the Absolute is noumenal in all respects. These paradoxical attributes are part of the essential nature of the Absolute as both the cause and ingredient of creation.

One can understand and reach the Absolute only by practicing directed consciousness as taught in *Vedānta*. Approaching the Absolute grants the student eternal transcendental bliss. Except for sincere students of *Vedānta*, no others can attain this eternal bliss. Those who approach and understand the Absolute also become free from repeatedly accepting material bodies for continued residence in the material world. They attain liberation from this world, and obtain eternal residence in the transcendental world of the Absolute, where they automatically attain complete fulfillment of their desires in the personal company of the Absolute. All this is described in detail in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

In summary, an intelligent person with good moral character who has studied and understood both religion and material science, who clearly understands the ontological difference between the temporary and the eternal, who has lost all attraction for the temporary and chosen the eternal, and who gets the opportunity to associate with a self-realized person, becomes a sincere student of *Vedānta-sūtra*. It is not a fact that simply by the study and practice of material science and religion one will naturally get the same benefits as the study of *Vedānta-sūtra* provides. We see that those who have studied material science and religion, but have not associated favorably with self-realized teachers of *Vedānta*, do not become eager to understand the Absolute, but attempt to adjust their expectations to the limited happiness offered by material knowledge and work. It is also untrue that simply by understanding the philosophical difference between the temporary and the eternal, and attaining the moral qualities and renunciation of saintly persons, one will become able to understand and realize the Absolute. These qualifications are necessary, but not sufficient to attain the platform of transcendental knowledge.

On the other hand, those who are not expert scientists or pious religionists, but who have come into favorable personal association with a self-realized person, naturally become attracted to understanding the Absolute. We have seen that in general, three kinds of persons become qualified to inquire into the nature of Brahman: 1. *Sanīṣṭha*—pious people who faithfully perform their material and religious duties; 2. *Pariniṣṭha*—those who spontaneously act philanthropically for the benefit of all living entities; and 3. *Nirapekṣa*—those who are already rapt in meditation and aloof from the activities of this world. All these persons understand the nature of the Absolute according to their respective qualifications. If they gain the association of a self-realized person and follow his instructions, that higher study compensates for whatever they lack in qualifications. Even if they lack a broad background in religion, the arts, sciences and philosophy, or if their character or behavior is flawed, still they automatically obtain all prerequisite qualifications simply by studying *Vedānta* with a qualified teacher. Over time they gradually become more and more advanced in the discipline of *Vedānta*, and eventually they attain direct contact with the Absolute as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In conclusion, at a particular point in life, after certain understandings and realizations, a fortunate person may become eager to inquire about the nature of the Absolute. The Absolute is not merely a philosophical conception; nor is it a projection of an artificial philosophical construct or the consciousness of the individual on reality. All living entities have taken their birth because of the Absolute. They remain alive because they are maintained by the Absolute, and at the time of death they

again enter into the Absolute. Please try to understand that the Absolute is the eternal ground of Being, the universal fount of consciousness, existence and life.

The nature of the transcendental knowledge of the Absolute imparted by study of *Vedānta* is unlike any other kind of knowledge. It is not knowledge of a kind of material activity, because that kind of knowledge and activity can give only temporary, mundane results. It is not discursive knowledge like ordinary literature or mathematics, because such ordinary symbolic knowledge cannot free us from the materialistic realm it represents. Even if it were possible to impart an understanding of transcendental existence through language, this would not necessarily cure the deficiencies of our consciousness. For example, if a person who needs glasses sees the moon as double, simply hearing that the double vision is not a quality of the moon but of his vision may correct his understanding but not his astigmatism, even if he is firmly convinced that it is a fact. Thus, simply understanding the philosophical difference between mundane and transcendental categories of knowledge, consciousness and existence will not and cannot cure the disease of material suffering and rebirth.

Rather, the transcendental knowledge imparted by study of *Vedānta* is a direct experience that our common perception of the world and ourselves is an illusion based on ignorance. When the subjects in Aristotle's cave break free from their bonds and see clearly that the entire world of their experience, upon which all their knowledge was based, is actually false and contrived, their awakening is similar to that experienced by the aspirant who contacts the Absolute during Vedāntic meditation. When we see that all along we have been imagining the world, ourselves and life to be one thing, when actually they are something completely different, we awaken to a new reality, one that was there all along but remained latent and unsuspected, covered and hidden by our imaginative substitute reality.

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.2.23] states:

*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo  
na medhayā na bahudhā śrutena  
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas  
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanum svām*

“That Self cannot be gained by the study of the *Veda*, nor by thought or meditation, nor by much hearing. Whom the Self chooses, by him it may be gained; to him the Self reveals His being.”

And what kind of person does the Self choose?

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām  
bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam  
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ  
yena mām upayānti te*

“To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10]

*nāhaṁ vedair na tapasā  
na dānena na cejyayā  
śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭum  
dṛṣṭavān asi mām yathā*

“The form which you are seeing with your transcendental eyes cannot be understood simply by studying the *Vedas*, nor by undergoing serious penances, nor by charity, nor by worship. It is not by these means that one can see Me as I am.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.23]

*bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya  
aham evaṁ-vidho 'rjuna  
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena  
praveṣṭum ca parantapa*

“My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.24]

Therefore the actual practice of *Vedānta* is complete in the form of *bhakti-yoga*, the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There are many preliminary stages, each with its appropriate philosophical understanding, spiritual practices and realizations; but the stage of perfection is pure, undivided devotional service:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam  
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

“When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.” [Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.167]

The Vedic literature contains many scriptural passages on different levels, meant to appeal to people in various stages of self-realization. *Vedānta-sūtra* specifically addresses people on the cusp between the impersonal understanding of the Supreme and beginning to realize the personal nature of Brahman. Philosophical speculation and silent meditation may be an adequate method for addressing the impersonal aspect of the Supreme, but *bhakti*, or a direct personal service relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is necessary to realize the highest benefits attainable by study of *Vedānta-sūtra*.

*Vedānta-sūtra* is not an ordinary book, but transcendental sound vibration emanated by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author of *Vedānta-sūtra*, is the incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed by the following statement of the *smṛti-śāstra*:

*kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana-vyāsaṁ  
viddhi nārāyaṇam prabhum*

“Please understand that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana Vyāsa is actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa.”

That *Vedānta-sūtra* is a product of greater than human intelligence will become self-evident to the sincere reader upon deep contemplation of the extremely elevated subjects contained herein.

In conclusion, we have described here how at a certain point in time [*athā*], after tasting the experiences of life, contemplating their meaning and reaching certain conclusions about the existential condition of human existence in the material world, person should therefore [*ataḥ*] become eager to inquire about the nature of Brahman. *Vedānta-sūtra* is an opportunity to enter into the understanding of the Absolute Truth taught by the greatest sages, and attain personal, direct consciousness of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This bestows the highest spiritual perfections of full transcendental knowledge, immortality and eternal bliss upon the sincere student of *Vedānta* philosophy.

## **Adhikaraṇa 2: The Origin of Everything**

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is *ākṣepa* [objection].

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The Vedic tradition asserts that the source or origin of everything in the creation is Brahman, who is an unlimited, all-powerful transcendental person different from the *jīva* [individual soul].

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Someone may doubt: “In this *Vedānta-sūtra* does the term ‘the Absolute,’ ‘Brahman,’ ‘the all-pervading Infinity’ [*bhūmā*] or ‘the Self’ [*ātmā*] refer to the individual conscious living entity or the Supreme?” Some schools of *Vedānta* interpretation indeed claim that the word Brahman in *Vedānta-sūtra* refers to the individual conscious living entity, and to support this view they quote statements like the following from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.5]:

*vijñānam brahma ced veda tasmāc cen na pramadyati  
śarīre pāpmāno hitvā sarvaṃ kāmān samāśnute*

“If one understands the true nature of Brahman who lives in the body and uses the senses of the body to perceive the material world, then such a knower of Brahman never becomes bewildered by illusion. Such a knower of Brahman in the body refrains from performing impure actions, and at the time of leaving the body at death, he attains an exalted destination where all his desires are fulfilled at once.”

Some unauthorized traditions of *Vedānta* speculate that Brahman and similar terms indicate the individual conscious living entity. They say, “Here the word *brahma* is applied to *vijñānam*, which is one of the names of the *jīva*, and therefore the verse teaches that the *jīva* is to be meditated upon.” Because they do not properly understand the difference between the unlimited Brahman and the tiny *jīva*, they confute the Sanskrit terms *brahman* and *ātmā* with *jīva*, and mistakenly identify the individual living entity as the Absolute. For example, in the following passage Śrī Sanat-kumāra, after describing the Lord’s Holy Names and qualities, was asked a question by Śrī Nārada Muni [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.23.1-7.24.1]:

*bhūmā tv eva vijijñāsitavya iti bhūmānam bhagavo vijijñāsa iti. yatra nānyat paśyati nānyac  
chṛṇoti nānyad vijjānāti sa bhūmā. atha yatrānyat paśyaty anyac chṛṇoty anyad vijjānāti tad-  
alpam*

“ ‘One should ask about Bhūmā.’ ‘My lord, I wish to know about Bhūmā.’ ‘When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā. When one sees something else, hears something else, and knows something else, he knows that is very small. The Bhūmā is immortal, but that which is small is mortal.’ ”

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The context of the verse from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* quoted above shows that the *jīva* is the topic of discussion there. As *Sūtra* 1.1.1 refers to this text and says that this Bhūmā is to be enquired into, the words *brahma-jijñāsā* of *Sūtra* 1.1.1 refer to the individual soul and not to the Supreme. Even the Sanskrit dictionary explains: “The word *brahma* means that which is big, the *brāhmaṇa* caste, the individual spirit soul, and the demigod Brahmā who sits on a great lotus flower.” The word *ātmā* also means the individual soul.

For example, the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.5.6] states:

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ.*

“It is the Self [*ātmā*] which must be observed, heard about, thought of and meditated upon with fixed concentration.”

The complete text of this passage [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.1-6] is:

“And he said, ‘Verily, a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore a husband is dear.

‘Verily, a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore a wife is dear.

‘Verily, sons are not dear, that you may love the sons; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore sons are dear.

‘Verily, wealth is not dear, that you may love the wealth; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore wealth is dear.

‘Verily, the *brāhmaṇas* are not dear, that you may love the *brāhmaṇas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *brāhmaṇas* are dear.

‘Verily, the *kṣatriyas* are not dear, that you may love the *kṣatriyas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *kṣatriyas* are dear.

‘Verily, the worlds are not dear, that you may love the worlds; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the worlds are dear.

‘Verily, the *devas* are not dear, that you may love the *devas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *devas* are dear.

‘Verily, the living entities are not dear, that you may love the living entities; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the living entities are dear.

‘Verily, every thing [that is dear] is not dear, that you may love every thing; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore every thing [that is dear] is dear.

‘Verily, it is the Self [*ātmā*] which must be observed, heard about, thought of and meditated upon with fixed concentration, O Maitreyi! When we see, hear, perceive and know the Self then all this is known.”

Someone may indeed claim that the word Brahman here refers to the individual spirit soul, and to support his view he may quote the following statement of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.5]:

*vijñānam brahma ced veda  
tasmāc cen na pramadyati  
śarīre pāpmāno hitvā  
sarvaṇ kāmān samāśnute*

“If one understands the true nature of the Brahman who lives in the body and uses the senses of the body to perceive the material world, then such a knower of Brahman will never become bewildered by illusion. Such a knower of the Brahman in the body refrains from performing sinful actions, and at the time of leaving the body at death, he attains an exalted destination where all his desires become at once fulfilled.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Our philosophical opponent may claim in this way that the words Brahman and *ātmā* should be interpreted to mean the individual spirit soul. To clear away the misunderstanding of this objector, the following scriptural passages may be quoted:

*bhṛgur vai varuṇir varuṇaṁ pitaram upasasāra adhīhi bho bhagavo brahma... yato vā imāni  
bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayānty abhisamviśanti tad brahma tad vijijñāsasva*

“Bhṛgu asked his father Varuṇa: ‘My lord, please instruct me about the nature of Brahman.’ Varuṇa replied: ‘All living entities have taken their birth because of Brahman. They remain alive because they are maintained by Brahman, and at the time of death they again enter into Brahman. Please try to understand the nature of Brahman.’” [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 3.1]



*idaṁ hi viśvaṁ bhagavān ivetaro  
yato jagat-sthāna-nirodha-sambhavāḥ*

“The Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead is Himself this cosmos, and still He is aloof from it. From Him only has this cosmic manifestation emanated, in Him it rests, and unto Him it enters after annihilation.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.20]

*ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanty athetare duḥkham evāpiyanti*

“Those who know this Supreme Brahman become immortal, and those who do not know Him suffer the miseries of the material world.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.10]

To refute this misinterpretation, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author of *Vedānta-sūtra*, gives the actual definition of Brahman in the second *sūtra*:

### **Sūtra 1.1.2**

*janmādy asya yataḥ*

*janma*—birth; *ādi*—beginning with; *asya*—of that; *yataḥ*—from Whom.

**Brahman is He from Whom everything emanates.**

The compound word *janmādi* is a Sanskrit compound expression technically known as *tad-guṇa-samvijñāna-bahuvrīhi-samāsa*, here meaning ‘the sevenfold material cycle of conception, gestation, birth, growth, production of byproducts, diminution and death.’ The word *asya* means ‘of this material universe with unlimited planetary systems inhabited by various creatures, who all enjoy and suffer the results of their various fruitive actions, but who cannot understand the astonishing structure of the universe where they live, nor the Supreme Person who has created it.’ The word *yataḥ* means ‘from Whom,’ and it clearly refers to Brahman as a transcendental person. This Absolute Person, who manifests the universe from His inconceivable potency, is the Brahman about whom one should inquire.

According to etymological analysis of Sanskrit word roots, Brahman means ‘the person who possesses boundless exalted qualities,’ and therefore cannot be applied to the insignificant *jīva*. Both Brahman and *bhūmā* also mean all-pervading; this will be fully explained in *Sūtras* 1.3.7 and 1.4.19. Brahman thus refers only to the Personality of Brahman, who possesses unlimited transcendental qualities, and this is clearly confirmed in the following words of the *Vedas*:

*atha kasmād ucyate brahmeti brhanto hy asmin guṇāḥ*

“From Whom has this universe become manifest? From Brahman, who definitely possesses an abundance of exalted transcendental qualities.”

Brahman therefore primarily refers to the Personality of Brahman, and only secondarily to the individual conscious living entities, who although they emanate from Brahman and are composed of Brahman, can manifest the qualities of Brahman only to a very small degree. The individual living entities can be called Brahman, just as sons are called by their father’s family name, because their substance and qualities derive from their relationship with the Supreme Brahman. Although they are from Brahman and are eternally related to Brahman, the individual living entities are suffering the unwanted miseries of material life, such as birth, old age, disease and death, because of ignorance. This is the proof that they are not identical with the Supreme Brahman.

The Supreme Brahman is never subject to ignorance or suffering. Therefore the actual object of inquiry in *Vedānta-sūtra* is the Supreme Brahman, or the Personality of Brahman. *Vedānta-sūtra* is not an imaginary speculative description of Brahman’s qualities; it is the Absolute Truth about Brahman. To

attain ultimate liberation from all suffering, the individual living entities should inquire about the Supreme Brahman, who is very merciful towards those who take shelter of Him.

It is not possible for Brahman to be impersonal, for the same Brahman is the source of innumerable individual living beings, who are themselves persons. Can a product or emanation have more qualities than its source? We are persons, therefore our children and parents are also persons. Their parents were also persons, and so on back to the original Personality of Godhead. No one has ever observed persons coming from something impersonal; indeed, our everyday experience is that persons come from persons. Therefore the idea that persons come from something impersonal, or can be the result of some mechanistic or random process, is completely impossible and nonsensical.

The impersonal theory also is lacking from other perspectives. Later on in the text, we will present and elaborately discuss the theory that the individual living entity determines the type of universe, planetary system, environment and body in which he finds himself by the qualities of his consciousness and activities, and of his relationship with the Supreme Brahman. This so-called Anthropic Principle holds true because the living entity collapses or decoheres the Universal Quantum Wave Function in a particular way, depending on how his consciousness, energy and desires interfere with it.

To imagine the Supreme Brahman as impersonal drastically limits the range of possibilities of this decoherence, and forces the living entity into denser environments and less intelligent embodiments. After all, it is not possible to have a personal relationship with something impersonal. Therefore an impersonal conception of the Supreme Brahman does not permit normal personal relationships like communication, worship and the exchange of service, affection and love. Would anyone really want to spend eternity in relationship with something impersonal?

Different computer network configurations and protocols allow vastly greater communication bandwidth and computational throughput than others. Similarly, the impersonal conception greatly reduces the possibilities of communication with the Supreme Brahman. But when the living entity chooses a personal terminal configuration for interfacing with the Supreme Brahman, his communication bandwidth is greatly enhanced. Thus, as one inquires into Brahman, it is critical to keep an open mind on the issue of whether the Brahman discussed in *Vedānta* is impersonal or personal.

The following quotes from the *Vedas* indicate the real standard of success in the inquiry into Brahman:

*tam eva dhīro vijñāya prajñām kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ*

“An intelligent equipoised person who has realized Brahman must endeavor to know the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, and surrender unto Him with loving devotion.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.21]

*vijñāya prajñām kurvīta*

“After learning about the Personality of Brahman, one should become able to see Him directly.”

The word *jijñāsā* in the first *sūtra* means ‘the desire to know, or acquire *jñāna*.’ Knowledge is of two kinds: theoretical and conceptual, or practical and empirical. Theoretical knowledge of *Vedānta* helps bring us closer to the Supreme Brahman, and practical knowledge or realization of *Vedānta* should lead to the Supreme Brahman personally manifesting before us. If someone claims to be a teacher of *Vedānta*, yet does not display the symptoms of one who is rapt in ecstatic direct personal contact with the Supreme Brahman, we can understand that he has not yet attained perfection in the practice of *Vedānta*.

If one understands one’s real identity as an individual conscious living entity, that is certainly very helpful in understanding Brahman, because the transcendental qualities of the spiritual living entity are

similar to those of Brahman. Nevertheless that does not mean that the individual conscious living entity is identical to Brahman. The individual living entity is always different from Brahman, and even after liberation from material existence, he remains eternally different from the Supreme Brahman.

The difference between the individual living entity and Brahman is clearly described in *Sūtras* 1.1.16, 1.1.17, 1.3.5, 1.3.21 and 1.3.41. Because an error in this fundamental concept can completely derail the student's progress in inquiring into Brahman, it is necessary to discuss this point in some detail before going further. Students who already accept the personal nature of the Supreme should also study these arguments to help them defeat the misinterpretations of *Vedānta* recently fabricated and introduced by the impersonalist school of Śaṅkara.

The impersonalist school misinterprets Vedic references to Brahman to force out the false conclusion that the individual living entity and the Supreme Brahman are identical. They take Vedic statements out of context, and use word jugglery to misinterpret them to convince the weak-minded that the authority of the Vedic scriptures supports their imaginary theory. This is not only illogical but also unethical. The Vedic literature is not open to unauthorized speculative misinterpretation to support our pet theories; it gives the following guidelines for interpretation of difficult or ambiguous Sanskrit verses:

*upakramopasamhārāv abhyāso 'pūrvata-phalam  
artha-vāadopattī ca liṅgaṁ tātparya-nirṇaye*

“The beginning, the ending, what is repeated again and again, what is unique and novel, the general purpose of the book, the author's statement of his own intention, and appropriateness are the factors to consider in interpretation of obscure passages.”

If we apply these criteria to interpreting difficult passages in the Vedic literature, we clearly see that the *Vedas* consistently describe the Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entity as two distinct entities. For example, let us analyze the following passage from *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* [4.6-7] in the light of the above six criteria:

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśaṣvajāte  
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty anaśnann anyo 'bhicakāśīti*

“The individual living entity and the superconscious living entity, Brahman or the Personality of Brahman, are like two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds [the individual living entity] is eating the fruit of the tree [the sense gratification afforded by the material body], and the other bird [the superconscious living entity] is not trying to eat these fruits, but is simply watching His friend.”

*samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno 'nīśāya śocati muhyamānaḥ  
juṣṭam yadā paśyati anyam īsam asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ*

“Although the two birds are on the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness, bewildered by his own ignorance as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his eternal friend Brahman and knows His glories, at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties.”

In this passage, the *upakrama* [beginning] is *dvā suparṇā* [two birds]; the *upasamhāra* [ending] is *anyam īsam* [the other person, who is Brahman or the Personality of Brahman]; the repeated feature is the word *anya* [the other person], as in the phrases *tayor anyo* ‘śnan [the other person does not eat] and *anyam īsam* [he sees the other person, who is the Supreme Brahman]. The *apūrvata* [unique feature] is the relationship between the individual conscious living entity and the Supreme Brahman, which cannot be understood without the revelation of the Vedic scripture; the *phalam* [object or general purpose of the passage] is *vīta-śokaḥ* [the individual conscious living entity becomes free from

suffering by seeing Brahman]. The *artha-vāda* [author's statement of his own intention] is *mahimānam eti* [one who understands the Supreme Brahman becomes glorious] and the *upapattī* [appropriateness] is *anyo 'naśan* [the other person, the Supreme Brahman, does not eat the fruits of material happiness and distress].

By carefully analyzing this passage, we see that in all six points of interpretation, it teaches the difference between the *jīva* and Brahman. One can analyze many other passages from Vedic literatures in the same way, and one may clearly understand the difference between the Personality of Brahman and the individual living entity. Later on in the text, we will analyze this topic in detail, providing a wealth of detailed quotations from the original Vedic literature and showing their correct interpretations.

At this point, the impersonalist may raise an objection similar to the following: "A text is useful when it teaches something unknown to its readers; but when a text simply repeats what its readers already know, it simply wastes time uselessly. People in general already think they are different from the Supreme Brahman, and therefore if the *Vedas* were to teach them something new, it would have to be that the Personality of Brahman and the individual living beings are completely identical. For this reason, it should be understood that the individual conscious living entities are identical with Brahman."

To this objection I reply: "This view is not supported by the Vedic scriptures." For example, the *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad* [1.6] states:

*prthag-ātmānam preritam ca matvā juṣṭas tatas tenāmṛtatvam eti*

"When one understands that the Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entities are eternally distinct, then he may become qualified for liberation, and live eternally in the spiritual world."

What people in general do not understand is the precise way in which the *jīva* and Brahman are different is in their contrary attributes: Brahman is almighty, the *jīva* is limited; God is all-pervading, the *jīva* is atomic; the Lord is the controller, while the *jīva* is controlled at every step. Nor does the average person know that the Lord and the *jīva* have an eternal spiritual relationship based on transcendental love. Therefore the scriptures of all religions teach the differences between the Lord and the *jīva*, while the doctrine of oneness remains inscrutable and inconceivable, even according to its proponents; therefore it is not a true philosophy, but simply an exercise in mental speculation. The impersonalist conception of the identity of the individual and the Supreme is a preposterous phantasmagoria, like the horn of a rabbit. It has no reference to reality, and is completely rejected by anyone with a grain of common sense. Those few texts of the *Upāniṣads* that apparently teach the impersonalist doctrine are interpreted in a personalist way by their author, Vyāsadeva himself. This will be described in *Sūtra* 1.1.30.

### ***Adhikaraṇa 3: The Supreme Brahman may be Understood by the Revelation of the Vedic Scriptures***

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is *ākṣepa* [objection].

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The Personality of Brahman is the unlimitedly powerful creator, maintainer and destroyer of the material universes. Because He is inconceivable to the tiny brains of the conditioned living beings, He must be understood by studying *Vedānta* philosophy and similar Vedic scriptures. This is confirmed by the following statements of the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* and *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.9.26]:

*taṁ tv aupaniṣadam puruṣaṁ prcchāmi*

“I shall now inquire about the Personality of Brahman, who is revealed in the *Upāniṣads*.”

*sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya kṛṣṇāyākliṣṭa-kāriṇe  
namo vedānta-vedyāya gurave buddhi-sākṣiṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Brahman whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is the rescuer from distress, who is understood by *Vedānta*, who is the supreme spiritual master, and who is the witness in everyone’s heart.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Western thought is very much enamored by logic and reason. We derive many technological and economic advances from the logic of science and mathematics. But here we are being told that we cannot understand Brahman with these tools, but must seek this understanding from the authoritative scriptures, and this may make us doubt: “What is the best method for understanding the Supreme Brahman: the mental speculation of the logicians, or the indications of *Vedānta*? Maybe He is so far beyond our intelligence that it is impossible for us to understand Him at all.”

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The impersonalist school of *Vedānta* argues that the sage Gautama and other authorities, especially Śaṅkara, prove that Brahman can be understood by logical speculation to be impersonal. Sometimes they quote the Vedic aphorism *ātmaavāre mantavya*: “The Self is to be considered and reasoned about.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5] They take this as proof that Brahman can be known through dialectic reasoning. This viewpoint agrees with the predisposition of the Western mind to inductive logic. Therefore, the impersonalist Vedāntists are widely known in the West, while the much older and more authorized traditional Vedic personalist *bhakti* school is not taken so seriously.

The trouble with this viewpoint is that Brahman, or the Universal Quantum Wave Function, is by definition completely beyond objective empirical observation and speculative logic. Empirical reason and logic certainly have their scope of appropriate application, but they fail when approaching the Absolute, which has no obligation to conform to the limitations of human reason. In addition to universes with rules of physics similar to our own, the Universal Quantum Wave Function contains an unlimited number of universes with different rules, or perhaps with no rules at all. Do we really think that our fragile logic, based on our limited experience and scope of observation, can accommodate Brahman?

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Our only hope of knowing anything about Brahman is if Brahman reveals Himself to us. Fortunately, Brahman has appeared in numerous *avatāras* or incarnations just for this purpose. In fact, the history of these *avatāras* comprises the bulk of the Vedic literature, and narrations of the teachings and pastimes of the *avatāras* form most of the *Purāṇas* [Vedic histories]. Therefore in the next *sūtra*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva explains that Vedic scriptural revelation is the only way to understand the Supreme Brahman. He says:

### Sūtra 1.1.3

*śāstra-yonitvāt*

*śāstra*—the scriptures; *yonitvāt*—because of being the origin of knowledge.

**[The inferential speculations of the logicians are unable to teach us about the Personality of Brahman] because He may only be known by the revelation of the Vedic scriptures.**

In this *sūtra* the word “not” should be understood, even though it is unexpressed, to remain consistent with *Sūtra* 1.1.4. The actual language of the *sūtra* simply emphasizes the positive conclusion that one must take shelter of the revelations of the *Vedas*. Those who aspire after impersonal liberation are unable to understand the Personality of Brahman simply by logic and speculation. Why? Because logic is not the correct process for understanding the Supreme Brahman; He is known only by the revelation of the Vedic scriptures.

Among the Vedic scriptures known as *śruti-śāstra*, the *Upaniṣads* especially describe the Supreme Person. For this reason it is said, *taṁ tv aupaniṣadaṁ puruṣaṁ prcchāmi*: “I am inquiring about the Supreme Person, who is understood through the revelation of the *Upaniṣads*.” The process of logic and speculation described by the word *mantavya* in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.5], “to be understood by logic,” definitely has its place: it should be employed to understand the revelation of the scriptures, and not independently in philosophical speculation. This is confirmed by the following statement of *śruti-śāstra* [*Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva* and *Kūrma Purāṇa*]:

*pūrvāpara-virodhena ko 'rtho 'trābhimato bhavet  
ity ādyam uhaṇaṁ tarkaḥ śuṣka-tarkaṁ vivarjayet*

“Logic is properly employed to resolve apparent contradictions in the texts of the *Vedas* by harmonizing each statement with its context. Speculative logic without reference to scriptural revelation should be abandoned.”

For this reason the dry speculative logic of Gautama, Śaṅkara and others, including the modern materialistic scientists, should be rejected in favor of applying logic to Vedic scriptural analysis. This is also confirmed in *Sūtra* 2.1.11. After understanding the Supreme Person by study of the *Upāṇiṣads*, one should become rapt in meditation on Him and see Him face-to-face. This will be explained later in *Sūtra* 2.1.27.

The Supreme Brahman, Hari, is identical with His own transcendental form. He and His form are not two separate identities. He is the witness of all living entities, He is the abode of an unlimited ocean of transcendental qualities, He is the creator of the material universes, and He remains unchanged eternally. One may worship Him perfectly simply by hearing about His transcendental glories from a person who has realized them.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “The *Vedānta* philosophy does not give either positive orders or negative prohibitions, but simply descriptions, as the sentence ‘On the earth there are seven continents.’ Men need instruction in how to act. Therefore, what is needed is a series of orders to guide men. Men need clear instructions such as, ‘A man desiring wealth should approach the king,’ or ‘One suffering from indigestion should restrict his intake of water,’ or the orders of the *Vedas*, such as *svarga-kāmo yajeta*—“One desiring to enter the celestial material planets should worship the demigods with sacrifices”—or *sūraṁ na pibet*: “No one should drink wine.” In fact no one speaks without some object, either positive or negative, in mind. But the *Upāṇiṣads* do not give us a string of orders and prohibitions, but merely describe the eternally perfect Brahman. For example, the *Upāṇiṣads* tell us *satyam jñānam*: “The Personality of Brahman is truth and knowledge.” This is of small help in the matter of orders and prohibitions, because it does not teach any particular action. Sometimes the *Upāṇiṣads*’ descriptions may be a little useful, as for example when they describe a certain demigod, the description may be useful when one performs a sacrifice to that demigod; but otherwise these descriptions afford us little practical benefit, and are more or less useless. This is confirmed by the following statements of Jaimini Muni [*Pūrva-mīmāṃsā* 1.2.1 and 1.1.25]:

*tad-bhūtānāṁ kriyārthena samāmnāyo 'rthasya tan-nimittatvāt*

“The scriptures teach us pious duties. Any scriptural passage that does not teach us our duty is a senseless waste of our time.”

*āmnāyasya kriyārthatvād anārthākhyam atad-arthanam*

“Just as a verb gives meaning to a sentence, in the same way instructions for action give meaning to the statements of the scriptures.”

To this objection I reply: Do not be bewildered. Even though the *Upāṇiṣads* do not give us a series of orders and prohibitions, still they teach us about the Supreme Brahman, the most important and valuable object to be attained by any living entity. Therefore even though this knowledge does not specify any definite action, it is not at all useless, for it teaches about the existence and qualities of the Supreme Being. If there were hidden treasure in your house, and a description of its location were spoken to you, those words would not be useless simply because they were a description.

Understanding the existence and location of the treasure makes the means of recovering it self-evident.

Similarly the *Upāṇiṣads*’ description of the Personality of Brahman—who is the greatest treasure to be attained by any living being, whose form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss, who is perfect and beyond any criticism, who is the friend of all living entities, the Supreme Brahman who is so kind that He gives Himself to His devotees, and who is the supreme whole of all existence, of whom I am a tiny part—is not useless, but of great value to the conditioned living entity. The descriptions of the Supreme Brahman in the *Upāṇiṣads* are valuable, because they produce a conviction in the existence of the Supreme, leading to the remission of fear and the experience of transcendental happiness. The description “your son is now born” is useful because it is a source of great joy, and the description “This is not a snake, but only a rope partly seen in the darkness,” is also useful because it is a great relief from fear.

Similarly, by understanding the knowledge of Brahman given in the Vedic scriptures, the means of attaining Him become self-evident. The specific benefits attained by understanding the Supreme Brahman are described in the following statement of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.1]:

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma yo veda nihitaṁ guhāyām so ‘śnute sarvān kāmān*

“The Personality of Brahman is limitless. He is transcendental knowledge, and He is the eternal transcendental reality. He is present in everyone’s heart. One who properly understands Him becomes blessed and all his desires are completely fulfilled.”

So the knowledge of Brahman is not useless, but leads to the attainment of the highest blessings.

No one can say that the *Upāṇiṣads* teach about ordinary fruitive action [*karma*]. Rather, one may say that the *Upāṇiṣads* teach one to give up all material fruitive work. The *Vedānta* philosophy in particular teaches the value of transcendental knowledge. No one can say that the *Upāṇiṣads* and *Vedānta* describe anything other than the Personality of Brahman, who is the original creator, maintainer, and destroyer of all the universes, whose spiritual form is eternal, who is a great ocean of unlimited auspicious transcendental qualities, and who is the resting place and object of service of the goddess of fortune. Therefore the scope and focus of *Vedānta* is on matters relating to Brahman, and not *karma* or fruitive action according to Vedic principles.

In fact Jaimini was a disciple of Vyāsadeva, the author of *Vedānta*, and a faithful devotee of Brahman. He could not have taught a doctrine in conflict with that of his master. His apparent criticisms of Vedic texts that do not give specific directions are actually not meant to apply to the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* sections of the *Vedas*, such as the *Upāṇiṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtras* of Vyāsadeva, but to the *karma-kāṇḍa* portions of the *Vedas* describing ritualistic sacrifices. The two *sūtras* by Jaimini quoted above simply mean that

passages teaching *karma* or action must either command something to be done or prohibit something from being done.

In conclusion, Jaimini's description of the importance of *karma* has no bearing on the *Upāṇiṣads*, because the temporary benefits obtainable from material work are insignificant compared with the eternal benefits of self-realization. They are a hint to us that there is far more than pious fruitive work in the instructions of the *Vedas*. In this way it may be understood that the Supreme Brahman is the actual subject matter described in the Vedic scriptures.

## **Adhikaraṇa 4: Personality of Brahman Confirmed by the Vedic Scriptures**

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is *ākṣepa* [objection].

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: That the Personality of Brahman is described in all Vedic scriptures is confirmed in the following scriptural quotations:

*yo 'su sarvair vedair gīyate*

“The Personality of Brahman is glorified by all the *Vedas*.” [*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*]

*sarve vedā yat-padam āmananti*

“All the *Vedas* describe the lotus feet of the Personality of Brahman.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.15]

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: But some philosophers doubt that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the subject matter described in all the *Vedas*. Is this statement true or false?

Especially the impersonalist philosophers who want to deny the very existence of the Personality of Godhead argue in this way. Even the great transcendentalist Prahlāda Mahārāja stated in the presence of Lord Viṣṇu Himself:

*dharmārtha-kāma iti yo 'bhihitas tri-varga*

*īkṣā trayī naya-damau vividhā ca vārtā*

*manye tad etad akhilaṁ nīgamasya satyaṁ*

*svātmārpaṇaṁ sva-suhrdaḥ paramasya puṁsaḥ*

“Religion, economic development and sense gratification—these are described in the *Vedas* as *tri-varga*, or three ways to salvation. Within these three categories are education and self-realization; ritualistic ceremonies performed according to Vedic injunction; logic; the science of law and order; and the various means of earning one's livelihood. These are the external subject matters of study in the *Vedas*, and therefore I consider them material. However, I consider surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu to be transcendental.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.6.26]

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Modern materialists in the guise of empirical scientists and speculative philosophers want to imagine that God does not exist. Unfortunately to do this, they must also imagine that the soul or conscious self does not exist, and that consciousness, personality etc. are just epiphenomena of the human nervous system and brain. The existence of a large body of impressive ancient literature such as the *Vedas*, describing the transcendental qualities of the soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead in detail, is as embarrassing to them as it is to the orthodox theologians competing to prove the superiority of their respective religious sects. They cannot defeat the Vedic philosophy because of its inherent superiority, therefore they resort to various devices, including outright disinformation, propaganda and lies, to convince others that the *Vedas* are inconsequential. Somehow or other they brand the *Vedas* as ‘mythology,’ while promoting their own schools as the real truth. Of course, this subterfuge reveals far more about their lack of integrity than it does about the actual value of the *Vedas*.



Our philosophical opponents in various pseudo-Vedic lineages without a direct initiatory link with Vyāsadeva also maintain that it is not true that the *Vedas* teach only about the Personality of Godhead or the Supreme Brahman. They like to bring up the undeniable fact that the bulk of the Vedic literature describes various fruitive *karma-kāṇḍa* sacrifices, such as the *kariri-yajña* for bringing rain, the *putra-kāmyeṣṭi-yajña* for gaining a son, and the *jyotiṣṭoma-yajña* for traveling to the material heavenly planets [Svarga-loka]. For this reason, they say, it is not possible to accept the assertion of *Vedānta* that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the only topic discussed in the *Vedas*.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Vyāsadeva, the author of all the principal Vedic scriptures including *Vedānta-sūtra*, replies to this objection in the following *sūtra*:

## Sūtra 1.1.4

*tat tu samanvayāt*

*tat*—this fact; *tu*—but; *samanvayāt*—because of the agreement of all the Vedic scriptures.

**But that [Brahman or Viṣṇu is the sole topic of discussion in the *Vedas*] is confirmed by all scriptures.**

The word *tu* [but] in this *sūtra* is used to rebut the previously stated opposing argument. It is proper to say that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the sole topic of discussion in all the *Vedas*, in the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* and even in the *karma-kāṇḍa* section. Why? *Samanvayāt*: “Because the scriptures themselves bring us to this conclusion.” The word *anvaya* means “understanding the actual meaning according to the six maxims of Vedic interpretation given in the explanation of *Sūtra* 1.1.2,” and the word *samanvaya* means “perfect understanding after careful deliberation.” When we apply the above-mentioned rules of interpretation [beginning with *upakrama* and *upasamhāra*] to the texts of the *Vedas*, we will come to the conclusion that Brahman or Viṣṇu is the sole topic of discussion in all the *Vedas*. If it were not so, then why should the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* state that Brahman or Viṣṇu is glorified by all the *Vedas*? This is also confirmed by the lotus-eyed Personality of Brahman Himself, who says:

*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*

“By all the *Vedas* I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of the *Vedānta* [Vyāsadeva], and I am the knower of the *Vedas*.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.15]

*kim vidhatte kim ācaṣṭe kim anūdya vikalpayet  
ity asyā kṛdayam lokī nānyo mad veda kaścana  
mām vidhatte ‘bhidhatte mām vikalpyāpohyate hy aham*

“What is the direction of all Vedic literatures? On whom do they set focus? Who is the object of all speculation? Outside of Me no one knows these things. Now you should know that all these activities are aimed at ordaining and setting forth Me. The purpose of Vedic literature is to know Me by different speculations, either by indirect understanding or by dictionary understanding. Everyone is speculating about Me.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.21.42-43]

The Vedic literatures also state:

*sākṣāt-paramparābhyām veda brahmaṇi pravartate*

“Either directly or indirectly, the *Vedas* describe Brahman.”

In the *karma-kāṇḍa* section of the *Vedas*, Brahman is indirectly described in the discussion of fruitive action and various divisions of material knowledge, and in the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* section of the *Vedas* the transcendental forms and qualities of the Personality of Brahman are directly described. Material Vedic knowledge is a necessary prerequisite to the more advanced topics of transcendental knowledge and

realization. Therefore the *Vedas* discuss both mundane and transcendental subjects, just as a course in any subject begins with preliminaries and fundamentals, and only gradually exposes the more advanced topics once the student has sufficient preparation.

That the Personality of Brahman is the sole topic of discussion in the *Vedas* is also confirmed by the following scriptural passages:

*tam tv aupaniṣadaṁ puruṣam prcchāmi*

“I shall now ask about the Personality of Brahman, who is described in the *Upaniṣads*.”  
[*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 9.21]

*tam etam vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇa vividiṣanti*

“*Brāhmaṇas* study the *Vedas* to understand the Personality of Brahman.” [ *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22]

As for the various fruitive results that are offered to the followers of the *karma-kāṇḍa* rituals in the *Vedas*, such as the attainment of rain, a son, or residence in the celestial material planets, these benefits are offered to attract the minds of ordinary men who are attached to material fruitive activities. When ordinary men see that these material benefits are actually attained by performing Vedic rituals and chanting prayers such as the *viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra* [the Thousand Holy Names of Lord Viṣṇu], they become attracted to study the *Vedas*. By studying the *Vedas* they gradually become able to discriminate between what is temporary and what is eternal, what is illusory and what is real. Thus after prolonged study and practice of Vedic truth, they become averse to the temporary things of this world and come to hanker after Brahman. In this way it may be understood that all the sections of the *Vedas* actually describe the Personality of Brahman.

In other words, the *Vedas*’ descriptions of various religious practices and rituals assist the spiritual aspirant in becoming purified, so that his elevated character allows him to inquire into Brahman as described above. The preliminary process of worship and purification based on scriptural rules and regulations called *naimittika-dharma* helps establish the worshiper in pious credits, so he may pursue the actual eternal goal or *sanatana-dharma*. That the majority of the contents of the Vedic literature consists of such preliminary topics is no disqualification of the transcendental status of the Vedic literature in any way, because the final object of such preliminaries is becoming qualified to study and attain the actual transcendental goal of the *Vedas*: the personality of Brahman, or Viṣṇu.

Vedic rituals give material benefits only when the performer of the ritual is filled with material desire. If the performer is materially desireless, then he does not gain a material result, but rather he obtains purification of the heart and the manifestation of causeless spiritual knowledge. Therefore, the meaning of the previously quoted text from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.22] is that the demigods are considered to be the various limbs of the Personality of Brahman, and by worshipping them, one actually worships the Supreme Brahman, and the result of such worship is that one gradually become pure in heart and awake with spiritual knowledge.

## ***Adhikaraṇa 5: Brahman is Knowable by the Descriptions of the Vedas***

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous *Adhikaraṇa*] here is *ākṣepa* [objection].

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: So far we have applied ourselves to understanding the qualities and position of Brahman as described in *Vedānta-sūtra* and other Vedic scriptures, especially the *Upaniṣads*. The descriptions of Brahman or the Supreme Absolute are sometimes vague, because they are meant to be studied in the context of the Vedic system of disciplic succession.

*evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ*

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.2]

In that environment, the student approaches, serves and hears from a self-realized soul who has already understood the message of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*.

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.” [Bhagavad-gītā 4.11]

Thus there is no chance of misinterpretation because the Master is always ready to give the correct meaning of the text from his own realization.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Problems arise, however, when people of lower character refuse to accept the role of a disciple and try to interpret the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* independently, on their own authority, instead of accepting the original version of the Vedic authorities like Vyāsadeva and his disciples. Generally people are attached to sense gratification, and so they try to make the Supreme impersonal. The Personality of Brahman has established certain rules for human life; these are described in the Vedic scriptures, and if we violate them we have to accept the karmic reaction. People who do not want to follow these rules theorize that if Brahman is impersonal, then He cannot impose His will on the creation, hence anyone can do whatever they like without any consequences. So the impersonalists, who are generally atheistic and possess a demoniac character, try to prove that Brahman is not a person to justify their aggressive lifestyle of material exploitation and illicit activities of sense gratification.

Thus the impersonalist philosophy of the demons tries to establish that the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* describe the Supreme Brahman as impersonal and ultimately void. Their chief strategy is to take certain statements of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* out of context and twist the meaning to support their impersonal misinterpretation. They claim that Vyāsadeva, the compiler of the *Vedas* and the author of the *Upaniṣads* and so many other scriptures, made a mistake. Yet they quote freely from his writings to support their philosophy when it suits them. Thus the impersonalists’ entire argument is based on the authority and writings of a person they consider to be mistaken. That it is very difficult to get them to admit this contradiction speaks volumes about their level of intelligence and integrity.

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: One of the main arguments of the impersonalists is that “Brahman is so high, so transcendent, so much beyond human intelligence, that our words and symbols cannot describe it.” However, if we accept this argument, then as a consequence we will doubt the authority of all the religious scriptures in the world. Of course, the impersonalists also use many words to describe their own views, but somehow they want us to accept their arguments and pet quotations at the same time as we reject the words of the scriptures as a whole. Thus the unspoken part of their argument is that it does not apply to themselves. This *Adhikaraṇa* of *Vedānta-sūtra* defeats the hypocritical argument of the impersonalists in detail.

Simply by the use of logic and scriptural quotation, we certainly have already refuted the misconception that Brahman cannot be described, since we have doing exactly that for many pages already, and also showing many vivid examples of how He is described in the *Vedas*. Nevertheless no amount of verbiage can give a complete description of Brahman, who is by definition infinite. Impersonalists argue, therefore, that many scriptural passages support the theory that it is impossible to describe Brahman by words. For example:

*yato vāco nivartate aprāpya manasā saha*

“The mind cannot understand the Personality of Brahman, and words cannot describe Him.”  
[*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.4.1]

*yad vacanābhyuditam yena vāg abhyudyate tad eva  
brahma tad viddhi nedaṁ yad idam upāsate*

“No one has the power to describe Brahman with words, even though everyone’s speech occurs by the power granted by Brahman. Know that this Brahman is not material. Worship this Brahman.” [*Kena Upaniṣad* 1.5]

Many people doubt whether spiritual life in general, and Brahman in particular, is expressible by words. The *śruti-śāstra* quoted above states that Brahman cannot be described by words. That Brahman cannot be described with words is also explained in the following statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [3.6.40]:

*yato ‘prāpya nyavartanta vacas ca manasā saha  
aham cānya ime devās tasmai bhagavate namaḥ*

“Words, mind and ego, with their respective controlling demigods, have failed to achieve success in knowing the Personality of Brahman. Therefore, we simply have to offer our respectful obeisances unto Him as a matter of sanity.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes the argument of the impersonalists that Brahman cannot be described in words in the following *sūtra*:

## Sūtra 1.1.5

*īkṣater nāśabdām*

*īkṣateḥ*—because it is seen; *na*—not; *aśabdām*—indescribable by words.

**Because it is seen [that Brahman is vividly described in the Vedic scriptures, it should be understood that Brahman] is not indescribable by words.**

Here the word *aśabdām* means “that which cannot be described by words.” In this *sūtra* Brahman is described as not [*na*] indescribable by words [*aśabdām*]; on the contrary He is *śabdām*, describable by words. Why is this so? Because *īkṣateḥ*, it is seen that Brahman is described in the passages of the scriptures. We may also note that the word *īkṣateḥ* in the *sūtra* is *bhava* [passive], and it is formed by adding the affix *tip-pratyaya*. The unusual usage here is *ārṣa*, a certain degree of grammatical liberty allowed to an exalted author. For example, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [9.21] states:

*taṁ tv aupaniṣadam puruṣaṁ prcchāmi*

“I shall now ask about the Personality of Brahman, who is described in the *Upaniṣads*.”

We may note in this connection that the word *aupaniṣada* means “that glorious person who is described in the *Upaniṣads*.”

That the Personality of Brahman may be described in words is also confirmed by the following statement of *Kathā Upaniṣad* [2.15]:

*sarve vedā yat-padam āmananti*

“All the *Vedas* describe the lotus feet of the Personality of Brahman.”

There are many beautiful passages in the scriptures eloquently describing the Supreme Brahman in detail. For example:

“Brahmā could see that on the water there was a gigantic lotus-like white bedstead, the body of Śeṣa-nāga, on which the Personality of Godhead was lying alone. The whole atmosphere was illuminated by the rays of the jewels bedecking the hood of Śeṣa-nāga, and that illumination dissipated all the darkness of those regions. The luster of the transcendental body of the Lord mocked the beauty of the coral mountain. The coral mountain is very beautifully dressed by the evening sky, but the yellow dress of the Lord mocked its beauty. There is gold on the summit of the mountain, but the Lord's helmet, bedecked with jewels, mocked it. The mountain's waterfalls, herbs, etc., with a panorama of flowers, seem like garlands, but the Lord's gigantic body, and His hands and legs, decorated with jewels, pearls, *tulasī* leaves and flower garlands, mocked the scene on the mountain. His transcendental body, unlimited in length and breadth, occupied the three planetary systems, upper, middle and lower. His body was self-illuminated by unparalleled dress and variegatedness and was properly ornamented. The Lord showed His lotus feet by raising them. His lotus feet are the source of all awards achieved by devotional service free from material contamination. Such awards are for those who worship Him in pure devotion. The splendor of the transcendental rays from His moonlike toenails and fingernails appeared like the petals of a flower. He also acknowledged the service of the devotees and vanquished their distress by His beautiful smile. The reflection of His face, decorated with earrings, was so pleasing because it dazzled with the rays from His lips and the beauty of His nose and eyebrows. O my dear Vidura, the Lord's waist was covered with yellow cloth resembling the saffron dust of the *kadamba* flower, and it was encircled by a well-decorated belt. His chest was decorated with the *śrīvatsa* marking and a necklace of unlimited value. As a sandalwood tree is decorated with fragrant flowers and branches, the Lord's body was decorated with valuable jewels and pearls. He was the self-situated tree, the Lord of all others in the universe. And as a sandalwood tree is covered with many snakes, so the Lord's body was also covered by the hoods of Ananta. Like a great mountain, the Lord stands as the abode for all moving and nonmoving living entities. He is the friend of the snakes because Lord Ananta is His friend. As a mountain has thousands of golden peas, so the Lord was seen with the thousands of golden-helmeted hoods of Ananta-nāga; and as a mountain is sometimes filled with jewels, so also His transcendental body was fully decorated with valuable jewels. As a mountain is sometimes submerged in the ocean water, so the Lord is sometimes submerged in the water of devastation. Lord Brahmā, thus looking upon the Lord in the shape of a mountain, concluded that He was Hari, the Personality of Godhead. He saw that the garland of flowers on His chest glorified Him with Vedic wisdom in sweet songs and looked very beautiful. He was protected by the Sudarśana wheel for fighting, and even the sun, moon, air, fire, etc., could not have access to Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.8.24-31]

When it is said in the Vedic literature that Brahman cannot be described in words, the intention is to assert that He cannot be **completely** described in words. This is evident by the fact that there are so many passages like the one quoted above, where Brahman is described vividly. In the same manner of speaking one could say that “No one can see Mount Meru,” because no one can see the entire mountain, but only small parts of it at any one time. Without accepting the understanding that Brahman is, at least to some degree, expressible by words or understandable by the mind—just not completely so—we would miss the real meaning of scriptural statements like *yato vāco nivartate*: “Words cannot describe Brahman;” *aprāpya manasā saha*: “The mind cannot understand Brahman;” and *yad vacanābhyuditam*: “No one has the power to describe Brahman with words.” These statements simply explain that Brahman cannot be completely described in words; they do not indicate that He cannot be described by words at all.

*śrī-drumila uvāca*  
*yo vā anantasya gunān anantān*  
*anukramiṣyan sa tu bāla-buddhiḥ*  
*rajāmsi bhūmer gaṇayet kathañcit*  
*kālena naivākhila-śakti-dhāmnaḥ*

Śrī Drumila said: “Anyone trying to enumerate or describe fully the unlimited qualities of the unlimited Supreme Lord has the intelligence of a foolish child. Even if a great genius could somehow or other, after a time-consuming endeavor, count all the particles of dust on the surface of the earth, such a genius could never count the attractive qualities of the Personality of Godhead, who is the reservoir of all potencies.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.4.2]

If this were not so, it would not be said that the Supreme Brahman is self-manifested. That Brahman can be described with words to some extent does not contradict the fact that Brahman reveals Himself by His own wish. The *Vedas* are actually the sound incarnation of Brahman, and therefore Brahman may reveal Himself in the words of the *Vedas*. In fact, only Brahman has the power to reveal Himself with words, because only He knows Himself fully. This same question is discussed in detail in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*brahman brahmaṇy anirdeśye*  
*nirguṇe guṇa-vṛttayah*  
*katham caranti śrutayah*  
*sākṣāt sad-asataḥ pare*

Śrī Parīkṣit said: “O *brāhmaṇa*, how can the *Vedas* directly describe the Supreme Absolute Truth, who cannot be described in words? The *Vedas* are limited to describing the qualities of material nature, but the Supreme is devoid of these qualities, being transcendental to all material manifestations and their causes.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.1]

We should consider that words have three kinds of expressive capacities, called *śabda-vṛttis*. These are the different ways a word refers to its meaning, distinguished as *mukhya-vṛtti*, *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* and *gauṇa-vṛtti*. The *śabda-vṛtti* termed *mukhya* is the primary, literal meaning of a word; this is also known as *abhidhā*, a word’s denotation or dictionary meaning. *Mukhya-vṛtti* is further divided into two subcategories, namely *rūḍhi* and *yoga*. A primary meaning is called *rūḍhi* when it is based on conventional usage, and *yoga* when it is derived from another word’s meaning by regular etymological rules.

For example, the word *go* [cow] is an example of *rūḍhi*, since its relation with its literal meaning is purely conventional. The denotation of the word *pācaka* [chef], on the other hand, is a *yoga-vṛtti*, through the word’s derivation from the root *pac* [to cook] by addition of the agentive suffix *-ka*.

Beside its *mukhya-vṛtti*, or primary meaning, a word can also be used in a secondary, metaphorical sense. This usage is called *lakṣaṇā* [indirect definition]. The rule is that a word should not be understood metaphorically if its *mukhya-vṛtti* makes sense in the given context; only after the *mukhya-vṛtti* fails to convey a meaning suitable to the context may *lakṣaṇā-vṛtti* be justifiably presumed. The function of *lakṣaṇā* is technically explained in the *kāvya-śāstras* as an extended reference, pointing to something in some way related to the object of the literal meaning. Thus, the phrase *gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ* literally means “the cowherd village in the Ganges.” But that idea is absurd, so here *gaṅgāyām* should rather be understood by its *lakṣaṇā* to mean “on the bank of the Ganges,” the bank being something related to the river. *Gauṇa-vṛtti* is a special kind of *lakṣaṇā*, where the meaning is extended to some idea of similarity. For example, in the statement *simho devadattaḥ* [“Devadatta is a lion”], heroic Devadatta is metaphorically called a lion because of his lionlike qualities. In contrast, the example of

the general kind of *lakṣaṇā*, namely *gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ*, involves a relationship not of similarity but of location.

In the verse quoted above, Parīkṣit Mahārāja expresses doubt as to how the words of the *Vedas* can refer to the Absolute Truth by any of the valid kinds of *śabda-vṛtti*. He asks, *katham sākṣāt caranti*: How can the *Vedas* directly describe Brahman by *rūḍha-mukhya-vṛtti*, literal meaning based on convention? After all, the Absolute is *anirdeśya*, inaccessible to designation. And how can the *Vedas* even describe Brahman by *gauṇa-vṛtti*, metaphor based on similar qualities?

The *Vedas* are *guṇa-vṛttayaḥ*, full of qualitative descriptions, but Brahman is *nirguṇa*, without material qualities. Obviously, a metaphor based on similar qualities cannot apply in the case of something that has no qualities. Furthermore, Parīkṣit Mahārāja points out that Brahman is *sad-asataḥ param*, beyond all causes and effects. Having no connection with any manifest existence, subtle or gross, the Absolute cannot be expressed by either *yoga-vṛtti*, a meaning derived etymologically, or *lakṣaṇā*, metaphor, since both require some relationship of Brahman to other entities.

The answer to this doubt is given in the next *śloka*:

*śrī-śuka uvāca*  
*buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān*  
*janānām asṛjat prabhuḥ*  
*mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthaṁ ca*  
*ātmane 'kalpanāya ca*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: “The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the [conditioned] living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated in future lives and ultimately attain liberation.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.87.2]

When the conditioned living entities lay dormant within the transcendental body of Lord Viṣṇu at the dawn of the material creation, He initiated the process of creation by sending forth the coverings of intelligence, mind and so on, only for the living entities’ benefit. As stated here, Viṣṇu is the independent Lord [*prabhu*], and the living entities are *jana*, His dependents. Thus the Lord creates the cosmos entirely for the living entities’ sake; as the creator and eternal Friend of the living entities, compassion is His sole motive.

The Supreme Lord enables the living entities them to pursue sense gratification by providing them with with gross and subtle bodies, and in the human form, the preliminary Vedic principles of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. In each body the conditioned soul utilizes his senses for enjoyment, and when he comes to the human form he must also discharge various duties assigned by the Vedic scriptures at the different stages of his life. If he faithfully discharges his duties, he earns more extensive and refined enjoyment in the future; if not, he is degraded by karmic reactions. And when the soul eventually hankers for freedom from material conditioned life, the path of liberation is available through the transcendental instructions of the *Vedas*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī comments that in this verse the repeated use of the word *ca* [and] indicates the importance of all of what the Lord provides—not only the path of liberation, but also the paths of gradual elevation through religious life and appropriate sense enjoyment. Thus the living entities depend on the Lord’s mercy for success in all their endeavors. Without intelligence, senses, mind and life energy, the living entities cannot achieve anything—neither elevation to heaven, purification through knowledge, perfection of the eightfold meditational *yoga*, nor pure devotion through following the process of *bhakti-yoga*, beginning with hearing and chanting the transcendental sound vibration of the Holy Names of God.

If the Supreme Brahman arranges all these facilities for the conditioned souls' welfare, how can He be impersonal? Far from presenting the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal, the *Upaniṣads* actually speak at great length about His personal qualities. The Brahman described by the *Upaniṣads* is free from all inferior material qualities, yet He is omniscient, omnipotent, the master and controller of all, the universally worshipable Lord, He who awards the results of everyone's work, and the reservoir of all eternity, knowledge and bliss. Therefore He is actually a transcendental person. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.9] states,

*yaḥ sarva-jñāḥ sa sarva-vid yasya jñāna-mayaṁ tapaḥ*

“He who is all-knowing, from whom the potency of all knowledge comes—He is the wisest of all.”

In the words of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.22, 3.7.3, and 1.2.4],

*sarvasya vāśī sarvasyeśānaḥ*

“He is the Lord and controller of everyone”

*yaḥ pṛthivyām tiṣṭhan pṛthivyā āntaraḥ*

“He who resides within the earth and pervades it”

*so 'kāmayata bahu syām*

“He desired, ‘I will become many.’”

Similarly, the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* [3.11] states,

*sa aikṣata tat tejo 'srjata*

“He glanced at His potency, who then manifested the creation,”

while the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.1.1] declares,

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*

“The Supreme is unlimited truth and knowledge.”

The phrase *tat tvam asi*, “You are that [Brahman]” [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.8.7], is often cited by impersonalists as a confirmation of the absolute identity of the finite *jīva* soul with his creator. Śaṅkarācārya and his followers elevate these words to the status of a *mahā-vākya*, a key phrase they imagine to express the essential purport of *Vedānta*. The leading thinkers of the authorized Vaiṣṇava schools of *Vedānta* strongly disagree with this misinterpretation. The phrase *mahā-vākya* does not appear anywhere in the *Vedas* themselves. *Ācāryas* Rāmānuja, Madhva, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and others have offered numerous alternative explanations according to a systematic study of the *Upaniṣads* and other *śrutis*.

The question Mahārāja Parīkṣit has submitted in the *sloka* quoted above—namely, “How can the *Vedas* directly refer to the Absolute Truth?”—has been answered as follows by Śukadeva Gosvāmī: “The Lord created intelligence and other elements for the sake of the conditioned living beings.” A skeptic may object that this answer is irrelevant. But Śukadeva Gosvāmī's answer is not actually irrelevant. Answers to subtle questions must often be phrased indirectly. As Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself states in His instructions to Uddhava:

*parokṣa-vādā rṣayaḥ parokṣaṁ mama ca priyam*

“The Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.21.35]



The impersonalists on whose behalf Parīkṣit Mahārāja asked his question cannot appreciate the direct answer, so instead Śrīla Śukadeva gives an indirect reply: “You assert that Brahman is indescribable by words. But if the Supreme Lord had not created the intelligence, mind and senses, then sound and the other objects of perception would all be just as indescribable as your idea of Brahman. You would have been blind and deaf since birth, and would know nothing about physical forms and sounds, what to speak of the Absolute. So, just as the merciful Lord has given us all faculties of perception for experiencing and describing to others the sensations of sight, sound and so forth, in the same way He may give someone the receptive capacity to realize Brahman. He may, if He chooses, create some extraordinary way for words to function—apart from their ordinary references to material substances, qualities, categories and actions—that will enable them to express the Supreme Truth. He is, after all, the almighty Lord [*prabhu*], and He can easily make the indescribable describable.”

This is exactly the case. The Lord has created a special category of terminology—transcendental sound vibration—whose meaning is completely spiritual and has nothing to do with the material world. The Supreme Brahman describes to Citraketu,

*aham vai sarva-bhūtāni  
bhūtātmā bhūta-bhāvanah  
śabda-brahma param brahma  
mamobhe śāśvatī tanū*

“All living entities, moving and nonmoving, are My expansions and are separate from Me. I am the Supersoul of all living beings, who exist because I manifest them. I am the form of the transcendental vibrations [like *omkāra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Rāma and other Holy Names], and I am the Supreme Absolute Truth. These two forms of Mine—namely, the transcendental sound and the eternally blissful spiritual form of the Deity, are My eternal forms; they are not material.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.16.51]

Lord Matsya, who saved the *Vedas* at the time of universal devastation by assuming the form of a gigantic fish, assures King Satyavrata that the Absolute Truth can be known from the words of the *Vedas*:

*madīyam mahimānam ca  
param brahmeti śabditam  
vetsyasy anugrahītam me  
sampraśnair vivṛtam hṛdi*

“You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *param brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.24.38]

Because *śabda-brahma* [transcendental sound vibration] is originally spoken by the Supreme Brahman Himself, it perfectly describes His spiritual forms, qualities and activities. It is very difficult to understand Brahman, but when He describes Himself in the words of the scriptures, then it becomes not only possible, but easy. If we take shelter of the authoritative statements of the Vedic scriptures with our intelligence, then very soon we will attain conclusive understanding of the Supreme Brahman through this transcendental sound vibration.

The fortunate soul who has been blessed by the Supreme Lord with a spirit of inquisitiveness into the nature and qualities of Brahman naturally will ask questions about the nature of the Absolute, and by hearing the answers given by the Supreme Himself and recorded in the Vedic literatures, he will come to understand the Lord as He is. Thus only by the special mercy of the Supreme Person does Brahman

become *śabdītam*, “denoted by words.” Otherwise, without the Lord’s exceptional grace, not even the words of the *Vedas* can reveal the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī suggests that the word *buddhi* in the *sloka* above spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī can indicate the *mahat-tattva*, from which evolve the various expansions of ether [such as sound], which are designated here as *indriya* [sense objects]. *Mātrārtham*, then, means “for the sake of using transcendental sound to describe Brahman,” since the Supreme Lord inspired *prakṛti* to evolve ether [space or air] and sound—the medium and object, respectively, of the sense of hearing—for that precise purpose.

A further understanding of the purpose of creation is given by the words *bhavārtham* and *ātmāne kalpanāya* [if the reading *kalpanāya* instead of *akalpanāya* in some recensions of the text is taken]. *Bhavārtham* means “for the good of the living entities.” Worship [*kalpanam*] of the Supreme Self [*ātmāne*] is the means by which the living entities can fulfill the divine purpose for which they exist. Intelligence, mind and senses are meant to be used for worshiping the Supreme Lord, whether or not the living entity has yet brought them to the stage of transcendental purification.

How both purified and unpurified devotees use their intelligence, mind and senses in worshiping the Lord is described in reference to the following quote from the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* [Pūrva 12]:

*sat-puṇḍarīka-nayanam*  
*meghābhaṁ vaidyutāmbaram*  
*dvi-bhujaṁ mauna-mudrādhyam*  
*vana-mālinam īśvaram*

“The Supreme Lord, appearing in His two-armed form, had divine lotus eyes, a complexion the color of a cloud, and garments that resembled lightning. He wore a garland of forest flowers, and His beauty was enhanced by His pose of meditative silence.”

The transcendental intelligence and senses of the Lord’s perfect devotees correctly perceive His purely spiritual beauty, and their realizations are echoed in the *Gopāla-tāpanī-śruti*’s comparison of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eyes, body and clothing to a lotus, a cloud and lightning. On the other hand, devotees on the level of *sādhana*, who are in the process of becoming purified, have only barely realized the Supreme Lord’s boundless spiritual beauty. Nonetheless, after hearing scriptural passages such as this one from the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, they engage in contemplating Him to the best of their ability.

*arthāśrayatvaṁ śabdasya*  
*draṣṭur liṅgatvam eva ca*  
*tan-mātratvaṁ ca nabhaso*  
*lakṣaṇam kavayo viduḥ*

“Persons who are learned and who have true knowledge define sound as that which conveys the idea of an object, indicates the presence of a speaker screened from our view and constitutes the subtle form of ether.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.26.33]

The Vedic sound vibration conveys the idea of the Supreme Brahman and since in our materially conditioned state, we cannot see Him, it also reveals his presence. Although the neophyte devotees have not yet learned how to fully realize the Lord or even meditate steadily on the effulgence surrounding His body, still they take pleasure in presuming, “We are meditating on our Lord.” And the Supreme Lord, moved by the waves of His boundless mercy, Himself thinks, “These devotees are meditating on Me.” When their devotion matures, He draws them to His feet to engage in His intimate service. Thus it is concluded that the followers of the *Vedas* have access to the personal identity of the Supreme only by His mercy in the form of the transcendental words of the *Vedas*.

*saiṣā hy upaniṣad brāhmī  
pūrveśāṁ pūrva-jair dhṛtā  
śraddhayā dhārayed yas tāṁ  
kṣemaṁ gacched akiñcanaḥ*

“Those who came before even our ancient predecessors meditated upon this same confidential knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Indeed, anyone who faithfully concentrates on this knowledge will become free from material attachments and attain the final goal of life.”  
[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.3]

That this confidential knowledge concerning the Absolute Truth can be expressed in words should not be doubted, since it has been passed down through authoritative lines of learned sages from time immemorial. One who cultivates the science of the Supreme with reverence, avoiding the distractions of fruitive rituals and mental speculation, will learn to give up the false designations of material body and mundane society, and thus he will become eligible for perfection.

The skeptics may admit that Brahman is describable by words to some extent, but still they may object that the Supreme Person described in the words of the *Vedas* may be *saguṇa*—a false, temporary manifestation of Brahman according to the modes of material nature—and not the perfect, complete, eternal and pure original Brahman, who being completely transcendental, remains indescribable by words. If this doubt were to arise, Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers it in the following *sūtra*.

## Sūtra 1.1.6

*gauṇas cen nātma-śabdāt*

*gauṇaḥ*—Saguṇa Brahman, or Brahman’s potencies; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *ātma*—*ātma*; *śabdāt*—because of the word.

**If [one says that the Brahman described in the *Vedas* as the creator is] Saguṇa Brahman [a manifestation of the modes of material nature, and not the original Supreme Brahman Himself, then I say] this cannot be true, because Brahman is described in the *Vedas* as *ātmā* [the Supreme Self].**

Two words in the revealed scriptures often applied to the Lord—*saguṇa* (“with qualities”) and *nirguṇa* (“without qualities”)—are very important. The impersonalists argue that when Brahman appears in the material world, He assumes a form made of material energy, and that only the Brahman in the spiritual world remains pure and without qualities. However, the word *saguṇa* does not imply that when the Lord appears with perceivable qualities He must take on a material form and be subject to the laws of material nature. Because He is supreme, He is always spiritual and the source of all energies; therefore He is always the cause, and never the effect of His energies.

*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ*

“This material nature is working under My direction.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.10]

As the controller of all energies, He cannot at any time be under their influence, as we are. The material energy works according to His direction, so He can use material energy for His purposes in creating the universe and living beings, etc. without being influenced by the qualities of that energy. Thus even when He appears in the material universe for the purpose of creation or pastimes, He is always *nirguṇa* because He is never affected by material qualities. Nor does the Lord become a formless entity at any time, for His eternal form as the primeval Lord is full of spiritual qualities. His impersonal aspect, the Brahman effulgence, is but the glow of His personal form, just as the sun’s rays are the glow of the sun-god.

Therefore the Brahman described in the *Vedas* is not merely a *saguṇa* manifestation of the mode of goodness. Why? Because the *Vedas* use the word *ātmā*, the Supreme Self, to describe Him. For example:

*ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣa-vidhaḥ*

“The Supreme Self [*ātmā*], who is a transcendental person, existed before this material world was manifested in the beginning.” [*Vājasaneyā-saṁhitā*]

*ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt nānyat kiñcana  
miṣāt sa īkṣata lokān nu sṛja*

“Before the material world was manifest, the Supreme Self [*ātmā*] alone existed. Nothing else was manifested at that time. The Supreme Self then thought, ‘Let me create the material planets.’” [*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*]

*aham evāsam evāgre  
nānyad yat sad-asat param  
paścād aham yad etac ca  
yo 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham*

“Brahmā, it is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead, and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.33]

These texts clearly refer to the Supreme Self [*ātmā*] who existed before the creation of the material world. Also, in the commentary on *Sūtra* 1.1.2, we discussed that the word *ātmā* primarily refers to the perfect Supreme Brahman, and not to anyone or anything else. For all these reasons the word *ātmā* used in the scriptures should be understood to refer to the transcendental Personality of Brahman, and not to any material manifestation of the mode of goodness. The transcendental Supreme Person is described in the following statements of Vedic literature:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam  
brahmeti pāramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate*

“Learned transcendentalist who know the Absolute Truth call this non-dual substance Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.11]

*śuddhe mahā-vibhūtākhye pare brahmaṇi śabdyate  
maitreya bhagavac-chabdaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇe*

“O Maitreya, the word Bhagavān refers to the Supreme Brahman, who is full of all powers and opulences, the original cause of all causes, and the supreme transcendence, pure and always untouched by matter.” [*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*]

In this way the supremely perfect and pure Brahman is described by the statements of the *smṛti-śāstras*. Therefore the scriptures can and do describe Him, and such Vedic transcendental sound vibration or *śabda-brahma* is qualitatively equivalent to the Lord Himself. Sound vibrations describing the Lord’s form, qualities and pastimes, and especially the Holy Names of the Lord, are identical with Him. One can realize this when one’s consciousness is situated on the absolute platform. Realization of transcendental sound vibration means that one clearly understands that the Holy Name and other descriptions of the Lord cannot be identified with any material sound. If this is true of the Lord’s Holy name and other descriptions of Him, how much more it must be true of the Lord Himself.

If it were not possible to describe Him with words, then the scriptures would not have been able to describe Him in the above quotations. *Vedānta-sūtra* will point out many instances of words in the *Vedas* that describe the Supreme Brahman. All these words are *śabda-brahma* or transcendental sound vibration, and as such are qualitatively equal to the Supreme Brahman Himself. This point is reinforced by the following *Sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.1.7

*tan niṣṭhasya mokṣopadeśāt*

*tat*—that; *niṣṭhasya*—of the faithful devotee; *mokṣa*—of the liberation; *upadeśāt*—because of the instructions.

**[The Brahman described in the scriptures is the transcendental Supreme Brahman, and not a temporary manifestation of the mode of goodness, because the scriptures] teach us that His dedicated devotees attain liberation.**

The word “not” is understood in this *sūtra* and the following three *sūtras* as well. The liberation of those devoted to Brahman is described in the following statement of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.7]:

*asad vā idam agra āsīt tato vai sad ajāyata tad ātmānam svayam akuruta. . . yadā hy evaiṣa etasminn adṛśye anātmnye anirukte ‘nilayane abhayaṁ pratiṣṭhaṁ vindate ‘tha so ‘bhayaṁ gato bhavati yadā hy evaiṣa etasminn udāram antaram kurute atha tasya bhayaṁ bhavati*

“Before the material cosmos was manifested, it existed in a subtle form. At a certain time it became manifested in a gross form, and at a certain time the Supreme Brahman manifested as the Universal Form. When an individual conscious living entity takes shelter of that Supreme Brahman, who is different from the individual conscious living entities, invisible to the gross material senses, indescribable by material words, and self-effulgent, then the individual conscious living entity attains liberation and is no longer afraid of the cycle of repeated birth and death. If one does not take shelter of this Supreme Brahman, he must remain afraid of taking birth again and again in this world.”

This non-material, transcendental Supreme Brahman is described in the following statements of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.88.5] and *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.26]:

*harir hi nirguṇaḥ sāksāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ  
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet*

“Śrī Hari, the Personality of Brahman, is situated beyond the range of material nature; therefore He is the supreme transcendental person. He can see everything inside and outside; therefore He is the supreme overseer of all living entities. If someone takes shelter at His lotus feet and worships Him, he also attains a transcendental position.”

*mām ca yo ‘vyabhicāreṇa  
bhakti-yogena sevate  
sa guṇān samatītyaitān  
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

“One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”

The Brahman described in these passages of the Vedic literature must be the Supreme Brahman who is beyond the limitations of the material world, who is the creator of the material universes and yet is transcendental to them. These passages could not describe a Brahman that is actually a manifestation of

the modes of material nature; for if this were so, then it would not be possible for those who become devoted to this Brahman attain liberation from material existence. People who are devoted to the manifestations of the modes of nature do not attain liberation by that material devotion. Therefore, the Brahman mentioned here must be the transcendental Supreme Person, who is beyond the modes of nature and completely non-material in nature, because the devotees who worship Him attain liberation. And how do they attain this liberation?

*satataṁ kīrtayanto mām  
yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ  
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā  
nitya-yuktā upāsate*

“Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.14]

*śrī-prahrāda uvāca  
śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ  
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam  
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam  
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

*iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau  
bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā  
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā  
tan manye 'dhītam uttamam*

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: “Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one’s best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) —these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23-24]

Hearing and chanting the Holy Name, pastimes, qualities and instructions of the Supreme are the principal methods of worship that bestow liberation. If these Holy Names and other words describing the Supreme Brahman were not transcendental, then how could they bestow liberation from material existence? Therefore the descriptions of the Lord in the Vedic literature are identical in quality with the Lord Himself, because their regular hearing and chanting are celebrated throughout the *Vedas* as the prime means for attaining liberation from material existence.

### Sūtra 1.1.8

*heyatva-vacanāc ca*

*heyatva*—worthy of being abandoned; *vacanāt*—because of the statement; *ca*—also.

**[The Brahman described in the Vedic scriptures is not a manifestation of the modes of material nature,] because no scriptural passage advises one to abandon [Brahman in order to attain someone higher].**

If the Brahman described in the scriptures were enmeshed in the modes of material nature, then why do the scriptures not direct us to abandon the worship of Brahman and worship someone higher? If this

Brahman were under the spell of the modes of nature, then why do those aspiring after liberation worship this Brahman to become free from the grip of the modes of nature? Clearly, the Brahman described in the scriptures is not entangled in the modes of material nature, and for this reason the scripture states:

*anyā vāco vimuñcātha*

“Give up talking about things that have no relation to the Supreme Brahman!”

*rājya-kāmo manūn devān  
nirṛtiṁ tv abhicaran yajet  
kāma-kāmo yajet somam  
akāmaḥ puruṣaṁ param*

“One who desires domination over a kingdom or an empire should worship the Manus. One who desires victory over an enemy should worship the demons, and one who desires sense gratification should worship the moon. But one who desires nothing of material enjoyment should worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.9]

Because worship of the Supreme Brahman does not grant material benedictions but leads to complete liberation from material entanglement, it should be understood that the Brahman described in the Vedic scriptures is not a product of the modes of material nature. Those who aspire for liberation should meditate with pure faith on this Supreme Brahman, who is eternal, filled with all transcendental qualities, and the original creator of the material universes, for this is the way to the highest attainment of eternal happiness. Therefore we advise that one should give up materialistic science, fruitive activity and speculative philosophy, and apply oneself to the scientific study of *Vedānta* and the cultivation of transcendental consciousness.

A person who aspires for liberation considers all the enjoyments of the material world to be absolutely useless, because they are temporary. Therefore it is seen that advanced transcendentalists are generally renunciants. Only those who are conditioned by the material modes of external energy are captivated by different types of material enjoyment. The transcendentalist has no material desires to be fulfilled, whereas the materialist has all types of desires to be fulfilled. Thus the materialist worships different material forms and names, while the liberated devotee worships the pure spiritual Supreme Brahman alone.

The impersonalists try to establish that the methods of worship of the Supreme Brahman given in the *Vedas* are actually material; then they teach that one can worship any material demigod and get the same result as worship of the Supreme Brahman. This is not only against the teachings of the *Vedas* but is also foolish, just as it is foolish to claim that purchasing a plane ticket to Paris will allow one to reach Australia. It is clearly stated in the scriptures that persons contaminated with material desires have different modes of worship, but one who has no desire for material enjoyment should worship the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Brahman. Generally worship of the Lord does not fulfill one's material desires for sense enjoyment, but He awards His worshipers the benedictions of transcendental knowledge and detachment, so ultimately they renounce material enjoyment. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as *puruṣaṁ param*, or the Supreme Transcendental Person, in the *sloka* quoted above. Even Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya has admitted, *nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāt*: the Supreme Lord is the highest, transcendental, beyond all material entanglement. There is nothing higher than the Supreme Brahman.

## **Sūtra 1.1.9**

*svāpyāt*

sva—into Himself; *apyāt*—because He merges.

**[The Supreme Brahman described in the Vedic literatures is not bound by the modes of nature,] because He merges into Himself, [unlike the creatures bound by nature’s modes, who all merge into something other than their self].**

The Creator of the material world is the unmanifested Brahman, and His creation is the manifested Brahman. At the end of the creation, the manifestation enters back into the unmanifested Brahman, thus it is said here that Brahman merges into Himself. The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [5.1.1] and *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* [Invocation] declare:

*om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate  
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate*

“The Personality of Brahman is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the complete whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the complete whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.”

In this *mantra*, the word *adaḥ* [this] refers to the *aprakaṭa* [not manifested in the material world] form of the Supreme Brahman, which is the root from which the various *prakaṭa* forms of Brahman emanate. Both *aprakaṭa* [manifested] and *prakaṭa* [unmanifested] forms of Brahman are perfect and complete. That is the actual meaning of *pūrṇam* [complete or Absolute]: He can expand into an unlimited number of forms, and each one is as complete in transcendental power and attributes as His original form. If there were actually a distinction between His *nirguṇa* [without qualities] and *saguṇa* [with qualities] aspects, the scriptures would state that the *saguṇa* Brahman expands from or enters into the *nirguṇa* Brahman, but the term “*saguṇa* Brahman” is not found in the scriptures. Therefore the idea of *saguṇa* Brahman is a concoction, as described in the next *sūtra*.

In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* it is said,

“The same Personality of Godhead who is known in Vaikuṇṭha as the four-handed Nārāyaṇa, the friend of all living entities, and in the milk ocean as the Lord of Śvetadvīpa, and who is the best of all *puruṣas*, appeared as the son of Nanda. In a fire there are many sparks of different dimensions; some of them are very big, and some are small. The small sparks are compared to the living entities, and the large sparks are compared to the Viṣṇu expansions of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All the incarnations emanate from Kṛṣṇa, and after the end of their pastimes they again merge with Kṛṣṇa.”

This *sūtra* explains that the Supreme Brahman, which is *pūrṇa* [perfect and complete], enters into Himself. This cannot be said of that which is not perfect and complete: for example, material nature or the living entities:

*sarva-bhūtāni kaunteya  
prakṛtiṁ yānti māmikāṁ  
kalpa-kṣaye punas tāni  
kalpātau visṛjāmy aham*

“O son of Kuntī, at the end of the millennium all material manifestations enter into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency, I create them again.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.6]



If the Supreme Brahman described in the scriptures were a product of the modes of material nature, then He would be described as merging into the Supreme, and not into Himself. In this way He could not be described as truly perfect and complete.

Brahman expands from His *aprakāṣa* form and appears in the material world in His *prakāṣa* form, displaying His *rāsa-līlā* and other transcendental pastimes. When the *prakāṣa* form of Brahman leaves the material world and enters into the *aprakāṣa* form of Brahman, Brahman remains unchanged, eternally perfect and complete. That Brahman is untouched by the modes of material nature, and that He expands into many forms, is confirmed by the following statement of *smṛti-śāstra*:

*sa devo bahudhā bhūtvā  
nirguṇaḥ puruṣottamaḥ ekī-bhūya punaḥ śete  
nirdoṣo harir ādi-kṛt*

“The Personality of Brahman is faultless. Even though He is the original creator of the material world, He remains always untouched by matter. He expands in innumerable *viṣṇu-tattva* incarnations, and then these incarnations enter Him and He again becomes one.”

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “There are actually two kinds of Brahman: Saguna Brahman [Brahman enmeshed in the modes of material nature], and Nirguna Brahman [Brahman untouched by the modes of material nature]. Saguna Brahman has a form constructed of the mode of material goodness. This Saguna Brahman is the omniscient, all-powerful creator of the material universes. Nirguna Brahman is pure transcendental existence only. This Nirguna Brahman is pure, perfect, and complete. The Saguna Brahman is the *śakti* [potency] described by the *Vedas*, and the Nirguna Brahman is the *tātparya* [meaning] of the *Vedas*.”

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument in the next *sūtra*:

### Sūtra 1.1.10

*gati-samanyāt*

*gati*—the conception; *samanyāt*—because of uniformity.

**[This is not so] because the *Vedas* describe only one kind of Brahman.**

In this *sūtra* the word *gati* means “conception.” The Vedic literatures describe Brahman as full of transcendental knowledge, omniscient, omnipotent, perfect, complete, pure, the all-pervading Superconscious living entity, the original creator of the material universes, the object of worship for the saintly devotees, and the bestower of liberation. The *Vedas* do not describe two kinds of Brahman: Nirguna and Saguna. In fact, the term “Saguna Brahman” does not even appear in the *Vedas*. This is a straw-man argument manufactured by the fallible human mind. Rather, the *Vedas* actually describe only one kind of Brahman: supreme, eternal and transcendental, without material qualities [*nirguṇa*]. This one Brahman is described by the Personality of Brahman Kṛṣṇa in the following words:

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya  
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*

“O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon me as pearls strung on a thread.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.7]

Thus the Vedic literatures describe only one kind of Brahman: Nirguna Brahman. There are many statements in the Vedic literature that confirm this:

*sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam  
sarvendriya-vivarjitam*

*asaktaṁ sarva-bhīc caiva  
nirguṇaṁ guṇa-bhoktr ca*

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all the modes of material nature.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.15]

*rājovāca  
brahmaṇā codito brahman  
guṇākhyāne 'guṇasya ca  
yasmai yasmai yathā prāha  
nārado deva-darśanaḥ*

King Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī: “How did Nārada Muni, whose hearers are as fortunate as those instructed by Lord Brahmā, explain the transcendental qualities of the Lord, who is without material qualities, and before whom did he speak?” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.8.1]

*anādir ātmā puruṣo  
nirguṇaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ  
pratyag-dhāmā svayaṁ-jyotir  
viśvaṁ yena samanvitam*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Soul, and He has no beginning. He is transcendental to the material modes of nature and beyond the existence of this material world. He is perceivable everywhere because He is self-effulgent, and by His self-effulgent luster the entire creation is maintained.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.26.3]

*evaṁ jyotir-mayo devaḥ  
sad-ānandaḥ parāt paraḥ  
ātmārāmasya tasyāsti  
prakṛtyā na samāgamaḥ  
māyayāramamāṇasya*

“The Lord of Gokula is the transcendental Supreme Godhead, the own Self of eternal ecstasies. He is the superior of all superiors and is busily engaged in the enjoyments of the transcendental realm, and has no association with His mundane potency. Kṛṣṇa never consorts with His illusory energy.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.6-7]

Śrīla Vyāsadeva describes this Nirguṇa Brahman even more clearly in the next *sūtra*:

### **Sūtra 1.1.11**

*śrutatvāc ca*

*śrutavāt*—because of being described in the *Vedas*; *ca*—and.

**[There is only one kind of Brahman: Nirguṇa Brahman], because Nirguṇa Brahman is described throughout the Vedic literatures.**

Nirguṇa Brahman alone is described in the statements of the Vedic literature:

*om tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā  
paśyanti sūrayo divīva cakṣur ātatam  
tad viprāso vipanyavo jāgṛvāmsaḥ  
samindhate viṣṇor yat paramaṁ padaṁ*

“Just as those with ordinary vision see the sun’s rays in the sky, so the wise and learned devotees always see the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu. Because those highly praiseworthy and spiritually awake *brāhmaṇas* can see that abode, they can also reveal it to others.” [Rg Veda 1.22.20]

*eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā  
karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca*

“The Personality of Brahman manifests Himself as the all-pervading Superconscious living entity, the witness present in the hearts of all living entities. He witnesses all activities of the living entity. He is the supreme living force. He is transcendental to all material qualities.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.11]

*ekas tvam eva sad asad dvayam advayaṁ ca  
svarṇaṁ kṛtākṛtaṁ iveha na vastu-bhedaḥ  
ajñānatas tvayi janair vihito vikalpo  
yasmād guṇa-vyatikaro nirupādhikasya*

“My dear Lord, Your Lordship alone is the cause and the effect. Therefore, although You appear to be two, You are the Absolute One. As there is no difference between the gold of a golden ornament and the gold in a mine, there is no qualitative difference between the cause and effect [of the universal cosmic manifestation]; both of them are the same. Only because of ignorance do people concoct differences and dualities. You are free from material contamination, and since the entire cosmos is caused by You and cannot exist without You, it is an effect of Your transcendental qualities. Thus the conception that Brahman is true and the world false cannot be maintained.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.12.8]

Thus Nirguṇa Brahman alone is described in the *śruti-śāstra*. The *śruti-śāstra* does not say that it is impossible to describe Brahman. Some say that Brahman may be understood not from the direct statements of the Vedic literatures but only indirectly, or from hints found in the Vedic texts. This is an incorrect understanding, for if the Vedic scriptures had no power to describe Brahman directly, then they would also lack the power to describe or hint about Him indirectly. The Vedic literature may say that Brahman has no contact with *guṇas* [materialistic qualities, or the three modes of material nature], and it certainly says that He cannot be seen by material eyes [*adrśya*], still it does not say that the words of the *Vedas* have no power to describe Him.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not said in the *Vedas* that Brahman has no *guṇas* [qualities]? Your statement that Brahman has qualities contradicts the description of the scriptures.”

To this I reply: This is not true. You can only say this because you do not understand the confidential meaning of the word *nirguṇa*. Because the Supreme Brahman is all-knowing and possess many transcendental qualities, when the scriptures say that He is *nirguṇa*, it should be understood to mean that He has no [*niḥ*] contact with the three modes of material nature [*guṇa*]. Brahman’s qualities are all transcendental, therefore it is a fact that He has no material qualities. This is confirmed by the following statements of *smṛti-śāstra*:

*sattvādayo na śāntīṣe yatra cāprakṛtā guṇāḥ*

“The Personality of Brahman, who possesses numberless transcendental qualities, is eternally free from the touch of the three modes [*guṇas*] of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance.”

*samasta-kalyāṇa-guṇātmako ‘sau*

“The Personality of Brahman possesses all auspicious qualities.”

For all these reasons it should be accepted that the Vedic literatures have the power to describe the perfect, pure, complete Supreme Brahman. When it is said by the scriptures that the Supreme Brahman has no names, forms or qualities, it should be understood that the Supreme Brahman has no **material** names, forms or qualities; and that His spotless transcendental names, forms and qualities are limitless and beyond the accounting of limited conscious living entities.

At this point someone may object, saying that “The literal interpretation of the Vedic statements is that Brahman is without qualities [*nirguṇa*], and your interpretation of the word *nirguṇa* as having only transcendental qualities is wrong.”

To this objection I reply: Does this description that Brahman has no qualities help to positively understand Brahman? If you say yes, then you have to admit that the *Vedas* do have the power to describe Brahman; and if you say no, then you have to admit that your careful studies of the scientific literature and religious scriptures have been a great waste of time, for you remain wholly ignorant of Brahman’s real transcendental nature and qualities.

*śabdā vācakatām yānti yantrānandamayādayaḥ  
vibhum ānanda-vijñānaṁ taṁ śuddhaṁ śraddadhīmahi*

“Let us place our faith in the Personality of Brahman, who is supremely pure, all-powerful, all-knowing and full of transcendental bliss. He is perfectly described in the *ānandamaya-sūtra* and the other statements of *Vedānta-sūtra*.”

Generally there are six great philosophers in Indian literature: Kaṇāda, the author of Vaiśeṣika philosophy; Gautama, the author of Nyāya [logic]; Patañjali, the author of mystic *yoga*; Kapila, the author of Sāṅkhya philosophy; Jaimini, the author of *Karma-mīmāṃsā*; and Vyāsadeva, the author of *Vedānta-darśana*. Five of these are atheistic philosophies:

1. The Mīmāṃsaka philosophers, following Jaimini, stress fruitive activity and say that if there is a God, He must be under the laws of fruitive activity. In other words, if one performs his duties very nicely in the material world, God is obliged to give one the desired result. According to these philosophers, there is no need to become a devotee of God; if one strictly follows moral principles, one automatically will be recognized by the Lord, who will give the desired reward. Such philosophers do not accept the Vedic principle of *bhakti-yoga*. Instead, they give stress to following one’s prescribed duty.
2. Atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophers like Kapila analyze the material elements very scrutinizingly, and thereby come to the conclusion that material nature is the cause of everything. They do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes.
3. Nyāya philosophers like Gautama and Kaṇāda accept the combination and interaction of atoms as the original cause of the creation, and inductive logic can arrive at the Absolute Truth. This philosophy is very similar to modern materialistic science.
4. Māyāvādī philosophers say that everything is an illusion. Headed by philosophers like Aṣṭāvakra and Śaṅkara, they stress the impersonal Brahman effulgence as the cause of everything.
5. Philosophers following the precepts of Patañjali practice *rāja-yoga*. Their process of self-realization is to imagine a form of the Absolute Truth within many forms.

All five kinds of atheistic philosophers understand that impersonal Brahman is without material qualities, but they believe that when the Personality of Godhead appears, He is contaminated and

covered by the material qualities. For them, Nirguṇa Brahman means “the impersonal Absolute Truth without any material qualities” and Saṁguṇa Brahman means “the Absolute Truth accepts a form of contaminated material qualities.” All these types of philosophical speculation are varieties of Māyāvāda philosophy; they reject the predominance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and strive to establish their own philosophical theories.

So atheism and materialism are not new; they have existed in various forms, under different names and teachers, for many millennia. The fact is, however, that the Absolute Truth never has anything to do with material qualities because He is transcendental. He is always complete with full spiritual qualities. By writing *Vedānta-sūtra*, emphasizing the essence of all Vedic literature, Śrīla Vyāsadeva established the supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, defeating the five kinds of atheistic philosophy. Because Vyāsadeva is the original Vedic authority, he is known as Vedavyāsa. Only his philosophical explanation of the *Vedānta-sūtra* is accepted by the intelligent devotees. As Kṛṣṇa confirms in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15):

*sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtīr jñānam apohanam ca  
vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo  
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham*

“I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the *Vedas*, I am to be known; indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedānta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*.”

From the 12<sup>th</sup> *sūtra* [*ānandamaya*] to the end of this First Adhyāya, Śrīla Vyāsadeva will prove that the statements of the Vedic literatures are intended to describe Brahman. The First Pāda of *Vedānta-sūtra* discusses those words of the Vedic literatures which, taken by themselves, would not necessarily refer to Brahman, but which in their Vedic context certainly do refer to Brahman. These transcendental terms are actually qualitatively identical with Brahman, because they help to describe Brahman.

Thus *śabda-brahma* is a special ontological class of nomenclature that, although composed of ordinary words, is actually transcendental sound vibration because the subject matter it describes is Brahman alone. Since the ultimate purpose of the *Vedas* is to reveal Brahman to the inquiring soul, actually the entire Vedic literature falls into this category of transcendental sound, even though substantial portions of it describe material subjects, such as religious sacrifices. Not only is it possible for the *Vedas* to describe Brahman, but because they emanate from Him and because describing Him is their main purpose, they are qualitatively identical with Him. Therefore association with *śabda-brahma*, the transcendental sound vibration of the *Vedas*, leads to realization of Brahman and liberation of the living entity from material existence. This is seen and also personally experienced by the faithful devotee who takes complete shelter of such transcendental sound.

## ***Adhikaraṇa 6: The Supreme Brahman is Full of Bliss***

The *saṅgati* [continuity with the previous Adhikaraṇa] here is *prati-dṛṣṭānta* [counter-illustration].

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: Brahman is full of eternal transcendental bliss, which manifests in His creation in different ways. There is a manifestation of the Supreme Lord's energy known as *annamaya*, by which one depends simply upon food for existence. *Anna* means food, and here the suffix *-maya* means a transformation of the original spiritual energy of the Lord. In the beginning of the development of consciousness, every living entity is food-conscious. A child or animal is satisfied simply by getting nice food, and all their thought and activity is centered on getting food. This

*annamaya* stage of consciousness, in which the goal of life is to eat sumptuously, is a materialistic realization of the Supreme at the lowest stage of consciousness, or animal life.

Then there is *prāṇamaya*; this means that after realizing the Supreme Absolute Truth as foodstuff, one can perceive and realize the Absolute Truth in the living symptoms of life forms. In this stage the living entity lives in the consciousness of being alive. If he can continue his life without being attacked or destroyed, he thinks himself happy, and his efforts center on getting more energy and power. This level of consciousness is slightly higher than *annamaya* because it is based on living energy, but it is still in reference to the gross body and is therefore associated with the lower stage of human life.

After this stage, when one's consciousness is situated on the mental platform, that is called *manomaya* or *jñānamaya*. *Manomaya* indicates the lower mental platform of accepting and rejecting based on sense enjoyment. In *jñānamaya* the living symptoms develop to the point of thinking, feeling, and willing. This is the intellectual platform, or higher level of human life where knowledge and reason become most important. The material civilization is primarily situated in these three stages: *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya* and *manomaya* or *jñānamaya*. The first concern of civilized persons is economic development, the next concern is defense against being annihilated, and the next consciousness is mental speculation, the intellectual or philosophical approach to the values of life.

If by the evolutionary intellectual process of philosophical speculation one somehow or other reaches the platform of spiritual understanding—that he is not this material body but is a spirit soul—then by gradual evolution of spiritual life he comes to the understanding of the Supreme Soul or the Supreme Lord. This is spiritual intelligence or Brahman realization, called *vijñānamaya*, by which the living entity's gross body, subtle mind and life symptoms are distinguished from the spiritual living entity himself. This is the beginning of real spiritual life.

The final, supreme stage called *ānandamaya* is realization of the all-blissful personal nature of the Supreme Brahman. When one develops his relationship with Him and executes devotional service, that stage of life is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the *ānandamaya* stage. *Ānandamaya* is the blissful life of knowledge and eternity. The Supreme Brahman and the subordinate Brahman, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entities, are both joyful by nature. When the subordinate Brahman or living entities become conscious of their eternal relationship with the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then their real life of perfect enjoyment begins.

This *ānandamaya* stage is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as the *brahma-bhūtā* stage.

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā  
na śocati na kāṅkṣati  
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu  
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

“One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.54]

This stage begins when one becomes equally disposed toward all living entities, and it then expands to the stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in which one always desires to render service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This desire for advancement in devotional service is not the same as hankering for sense gratification in material existence. In other words, desire is also there in spiritual life, but it becomes purified. When our senses are purified, they become free from all material stages of consciousness, namely *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya*, and they become situated in the highest stage: *ānandamaya*, or blissful life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thus there are five stages of realization of Brahman, which is called *brahma puccham*. The first three stages—*annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, and *jñānamaya*—involve the field of activity or the material body of the living entity. As long as the living entities are situated in the lower four stages of life—*annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijñānamaya*—they are considered to be in the material condition or conception of life, but as soon as one reaches the stage of *ānandamaya* he becomes a liberated soul. The Supreme Lord, who is also called *ānandamaya*, is transcendental to all these fields of activities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is by nature full of joy, and He expands into *vijñānamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *jñānamaya*, and *annamaya* to enjoy His transcendental bliss. In this field of activities the living entity considers himself to be the enjoyer, and the *ānandamaya* is different from him. As long as the living entity tries to enjoy separately or independently from the Lord, he suffers; but when the living entity decides to enjoy by dovetailing himself with the *ānandamaya*, then he also achieves perfection and becomes blissful.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: The Māyāvādī impersonalist philosophers consider *ānandamaya* to be the state of being merged in the Supreme. To them, *ānandamaya* means that the Supersoul and the individual soul become one. But the real fact is that oneness does not mean merging into the Supreme and losing one's own individual existence. Merging in the spiritual existence is the living entity's realization of qualitative oneness with the Supreme Lord in His aspects of *sat* [eternity] and *cit* [knowledge]. But the actual *ānandamaya* [blissful] stage is obtained when one is engaged in devotional service. That is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse quoted above. *Mad-bhaktim labhate parām*: the *brahma-bhūtā ānandamaya* stage is complete only when there is the exchange of love between the Supreme and the subordinate living entities. Unless one comes to this *ānandamaya* stage of life, the scriptures say that his breathing is like the breathing of a bellows in a blacksmith's shop, his duration of life is like that of a tree, and he is no better than the lower animals like the camels, hogs and dogs.

*taravaḥ kiṁ na jīvanti  
bhastrāḥ kiṁ na śvasanty uta  
na khādanti na mehanti  
kiṁ grāme paśavo 'pare*

“Do the trees not live? Do the bellows of the blacksmith not breathe? All around us, do the beasts not eat and discharge semen?” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.18]

*ṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhrto yadi te 'nuvidhā  
mahad-aham-ādayo 'ṇḍam asrjan yad-anugrahataḥ  
puruṣa-vidho 'nvayo 'tra caramo 'nna-mayādiṣu yaḥ  
sad-asataḥ param tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam ṛtam*

“Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. It is by Your mercy alone that the elements, beginning with the *mahat-tattva* and false ego, created the egg of this universe. Among the manifestations known as *annamaya* and so forth, You are the ultimate one, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, You are the reality underlying them all.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.87.17]

*viṣayābhiniveśena  
nātmānam veda nāparam  
vṛkṣa jīvikayā jīvan  
vyartham bhastreva yaḥ śvasan*

“Because of absorption in sense gratification, one cannot recognize himself or others. Living uselessly in ignorance like a tree, one is merely breathing just like a bellows.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.21.22]

These terms—*annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya* or *jñānamaya*, *viññānamaya* and *ānandamaya*—give the complete picture of the Supreme Lord as supreme knower of the field, the living entity as subordinate knower, and the nature of the field of activities or material body and subtle mind, in terms of the development of consciousness. For a more elaborate explanation of these terms, see our article [Six Stages of Conscious Evolution](#).

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: In the passages from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.6.1] beginning *brahma-vid āpnoti param* and *sa vā eṣa puruṣo 'nna-rasamayah*, we find a description of the *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, and *viññānamaya* stages of existence, and after that we find the following statement:

*tasmād vā etasmād viññānamayād anyo 'ntarātmānandamayas tenaiṣa pūrṇah. sa vā eṣa puruṣa-vidha eva tasya puruṣa-vidhatām anvayaṁ puruṣa-vidhaḥ. tasya priyam eva śiraḥ. modo dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ. pramoda uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ. ānanda ātmā. brahma-pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā.*

“Higher than the *viññānamaya* stage is the *ānandamaya* stage of existence. The *ānandamaya* stage is a person whose head is pleasure [*priya*], whose right side is joy [*moda*], whose left side is delight [*pramoda*], and whose identity is bliss [*ānanda*]. The *ānandamaya* is Brahman.”

Someone may doubt whether the *ānandamaya* person spoken of here is the individual conscious living entity or the Supreme Brahman. The impersonalists think that because *ānandamaya* is described as a person, it must refer to a conditioned conscious living entity residing in a material body, and that this *jīva* is identical with Brahman.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers this argument by speaking the following *sūtra*:

## Sūtra 1.1.12

*ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*

*ānanda*—bliss; *mayah*—full of ; *abhyāsāt*—because of repetition.

**The word *ānandamaya* [full of bliss] [used in the Vedic literatures must refer to the Supreme Brahman, for it is] repeatedly used [to describe Him.]**

The Supreme Brahman is the *ānandamaya* described in Vedic literature. Why do we say so? Because the word *ānanda* is repeatedly used to describe the Supreme Brahman in the Vedic literature. The complete passage from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* referenced by this *sūtra* follows:

“He who knows Brahman attains the highest. On this the following verse is recorded: ‘He who knows Brahman, which is cause, not effect, which is conscious, which is without end, hidden in the depths of the heart, in the highest sky, enjoys all blessings in the company of the all-enjoying Brahman.’

“From that Self [Brahman] sprang *ākāśa* [ether, space or sky, through which we hear]; from *ākāśa* sprang air [through which we hear and feel]; from air, fire [through which we hear, feel and see]; from fire, water [through which we hear, feel, see and taste]; from water, earth [through which we hear, feel, see, taste and smell]. From earth sprang herbs; from herbs, food; from food, semen; from semen, man. Man thus consists of the essence of food. This [food] is his head, this is his right arm, this is his trunk [*ātman*], this is his seat [the support]. On this there is also the following *śloka*:



“ ‘All creatures that dwell on earth are produced from food [*anna*]. They live by food, and in the end they return to food. For food is the oldest of all beings, and therefore it is called *sarvauṣādhā* [consisting of all herbs]. Those who worship Brahman as food obtain all food. For food is the oldest of all beings, and is therefore called panacea. All creatures are produced from food; when born, they grow from food. Because it is fed upon, therefore it is called *annamaya*.’

“Different from this *annamaya*, which consists of the essence of food, is the other inner Self that consists of breath or life energy [*prāṇa*]. The *annamaya* is filled by *prāṇa*. He also has a human shape; *prāṇa* is it His head, *vyāna* is His right arm, *apāna* is His left arm, *ākāśa* is His trunk, the earth is His seat. On this there is also the following *śloka*:

“ ‘The *devas* breathe after *prāṇa*, as do men and cattle. *Prāṇa* is the life of all beings, therefore it is called *sarvāyuṣa* [all-enlivening]. Those who worship *prāṇa* as Brahman obtain the full energy of life [*prāṇamaya*]. For *prāṇa* is the life of all beings, therefore it is called *sarvāyuṣa*. The inner Self of *prāṇamaya* is the same as that of *annamaya* [a human form].’

“Different from this *prāṇamaya* which consists of the essence of breath, is the other, the inner Self that consists of mind. The *prāṇamaya* is filled by mind [*manomaya*]. Similar to the human shape of *prāṇamaya* is the human shape of the *manomaya*; the *Yajur-veda* is His head, the *Rg-veda* is His right arm, the *Sāma-veda* is His left arm, the *Brāhmaṇa* is His trunk, the *Atharva-veda* is His seat. On this there is also the following *śloka*:

“ ‘He who knows the bliss of that Brahman, from whom all speech and mind turn away unable to reach Him, attains fearlessness.’ The inner Self of the *manomaya* is the same as that of the *prāṇamaya*.

“Different from this *manomaya*, which consists of mind, is the inner Self that consists of understanding [*jñāna*]. The *manomaya* is filled with this *jñānamaya*. He also has the shape of a man, like the human shape of *manomaya*: faith is His head; what is right is His right arm; what is true is His left arm; absorption in yogic trance is His trunk; great intelligence is His seat. On this there is also the following *śloka*:

“ ‘Understanding [*jñāna*] performs the sacrifice; it performs all the sacred acts. All the *devas* worship understanding as Brahman, as the oldest. If a man knows understanding as Brahman, and if he does not swerve from it, he leaves all evils behind in the body, and attains all his wishes.’ Different from this *jñānamaya*, which consists of understanding, is the other inner Self that consists of bliss. The *jñānamaya* is filled with this *ānandamaya*. He also has the shape of a man, like the human shape of *jñānamaya*; joy is His head, satisfaction is His right arm, great satisfaction is His left arm, bliss is His trunk, and Brahman is His seat. On this there is also the following *śloka*:

“ ‘One who thinks, “The Supreme Brahman does not exist” becomes a demonic atheist, and one who thinks, “The Supreme Brahman does exist” is known as a saint.’ The embodied Self of this *ānandamaya* is the same as the *jñānamaya*.”

Thereupon follow the questions of the student:

“Does anyone who does not know [this *ānandamaya*] ever go to that world [of bliss] after departing this life? Or does only one who knows [this *ānandamaya*] go to that world [of bliss] after departing this life?”

The answer is:

“He [Brahman] wished, ‘May I become many; may I grow forth.’ He contemplated Himself, like a man performing penance. After He had thus contemplated, He created all [beings] and

everything that is. Having sent forth the creation, He entered into it. Having entered into it, He became *sat* [what is manifest] and *tyat* [what is unmanifest], defined and undefined, supported and unsupported, endowed with consciousness and not conscious, real and unreal. Brahman became all this, and therefore the wise call Him Satya [the Absolute Truth]. On this there is also a *śloka*:

“ ‘In the beginning this [creation] was nonexistent, not yet defined by form and name. From it was born whatever exists. The Self [Brahman] made it, therefore it is called the Self-born. That which is Self-born has a flavor [that can be tasted], for only after perceiving a flavor can one taste pleasure. Who could breathe, who could breathe forth, unless that bliss [*ānandamaya*] existed in the sky of the heart? For He alone causes blessedness.’ When one finds rest and freedom from fear in that which is invisible, incorporeal, undefined, unsupported, then he has obtained the fearless [Brahman]. For if he makes the smallest distinction from it, there is fear for him. But that fear exists only for one who [merely] thinks himself wise [and not for the truly enlightened sage]. On this there is also a *śloka*:

“ ‘From fear of Him [Brahman] the wind blows; from fear of Him the sun rises; from fear of Him Agni and Indra, even Death perform their duties.’ Now this is the definition of what is meant by *ānanda* [bliss]: Let there be a noble young man who is well read in the *Vedas*, very swift, firm and strong, and let the whole world be full of wealth for him; that is one measure of human bliss.

“ ‘One hundred times that human bliss is one measure of the bliss of human Gandharvas [angels], and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of the human Gandharvas is one measure of the bliss of divine Gandharvas [archangels], and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of the divine Gandharvas is one measure of the bliss of the Forefathers [*pitrs*], enjoying their long sojourn in the heavenly realms, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of the Forefathers is one measure of the bliss of the Demigods [*devas*], born in the Ajana heaven through the merit of their good *karma*, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of the *devas* born in the Ajana heaven is one measure of the bliss of the sacrificial *devas*, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of the sacrificial *devas* is one measure of the bliss of the 33 principal *devas*, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of the 33 principal *devas* is one measure of the bliss of Indra, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of Indra is one measure of the bliss of Bṛhaspati, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of Bṛhaspati is one measure of the bliss of Prajāpati [Lord Brahmā], and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“ ‘One hundred times that bliss of Prajāpati is one measure of the bliss of Brahman, and likewise of a great sage who is free from desires.

“He who is this Brahman in man, and He who is that Brahman in the sun are one. He who knows [this Brahman], when he departs from this world, reaches the Self of food [*annamaya*],

the Self of breath [*prāṇamaya*], the Self of mind [*manomaya*], the Self of understanding [*jñānamaya*] and the Self of bliss [*ānandamaya*].

“He who knows the bliss of that Brahman, from Whom words and the mind recoil, not finding Him, fears nothing. Truly, thoughts like ‘Why did I not do the good? Why did I do the evil?’ do not afflict him. He who knows this Brahman pleases his self with both of these. Yes, he pleases his self with both of these. Indeed, this is the *Upaniṣad*.”

Directly following the description of *ānandamaya* in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.6.1] quoted above, we find the following statement:

*asann eva sambhavati asad brahmeti veda cet  
asti brahmeti ced veda santam enaṁ tato viduḥ*

“One who thinks, ‘The Supreme Brahman does not exist’ becomes a demonic atheist, and one who thinks, ‘The Supreme Brahman does exist’ is known as a saint.”

In this passage the word Brahman was repeated. This repetition is called *abhyāsa* in the *sūtra* under discussion. *Abhyāsa* means repeating a word without any qualifications. In the previous quotation from *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, the word Brahman appeared in the word *brahma-puccham*, but in that case the word only occurred once, and therefore there was no *abhyāsa* or repetition. So it is this Brahman, which is the cause of all the other aspects or embodiments of Brahman known as *annamaya*, etc., that is the *ānandamaya*, the knowledge of whom saves one from all fear, and whose bliss is calculated as 100,000,000,000,000,000,000 times the measure of human bliss.

We also see that the Supreme Person is repeatedly described as full of bliss in the Vedic scriptures. The *śruti-mantras* declare:

*satyaṁ brahma, ānanda-rūpam*

“Brahman is the Absolute Truth and complete *ānanda*, or bliss.”

*muktā hy etam upāsate, muktānām api bhaktir hi paramānanda-rūpiṇī*

“Even those who are liberated worship Him, and even for them devotional service is the embodiment of supreme bliss.”

*amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānaṁ  
caraṇaṁ no loke su-dhitāṁ dadhātu*

“May His feet, which bountifully pour forth floods of nectar, bestow wisdom upon us who are living in this world.”

*vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*

“The supreme reality is divine knowledge and bliss.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.34]

In his *Vedānta-bhāṣya* Śrīla Madhvācārya cites the following passage from the *śruti*:

*vāsudevaḥ saṅkarṣaṇaḥ pradyumno 'niruddho 'haṁ matsyaḥ kūrmo varāho narasiṁho vāmano  
rāmo rāmo rāmaḥ kṛṣṇo buddhaḥ kalkir ahaṁ śatadhāham sahasradhāham amito 'haṁ ananto  
'haṁ naivaite jāyante naivaite mriyante naiṣāṁ ajñāna-bandho na muktiḥ sarva eva hy ete  
pūrṇā ajarā amṛtāḥ paramāḥ paramānandāḥ.*

“I am Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. I am Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana, the three Rāmas [Rāmacandra, Paraśurāma and Balarāma], Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. Immeasurable and unlimited, I appear in hundreds and thousands of forms, none of which ever takes birth or dies. These forms of Mine are not bound by ignorance, nor do they

have to strive for liberation. They are all complete, free from old age, immortal, supreme and supremely blissful.”

The *Dhyāna-bindu Upaniṣad* states:

*nirdoṣa-pūrṇa-guṇa-vigraha ātma-tantro niścetanātmaka- śarīra-guṇaiś ca hīnah/ ānanda-mātra-mukha-pāda-saroruhādīḥ*

“[The Lord's] personal form possesses complete and faultless transcendental qualities. Indeed, the form of the completely independent Lord is free from all material bodily characteristics. His lotus face and lotus feet consist simply of pure ecstasy.”

The *Vāsudeva Upaniṣad* states,

*sad-rūpam advayaṁ brahma madhyādy-anta-vivarjitam/ sva-prabhaṁ sac-cid-ānandaṁ bhaktyā jānati cāvyayam*

“The Lord’s transcendental form is the Absolute Truth, devoid of duality or of middle, beginning or end. It is self-effulgent, eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. Only through devotional service can one understand that form to be infallible.”

The *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* states,

*nanda-vraja-janānandī sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*

“The body of the Lord, who gives ecstasy to the residents of King Nanda's pastures, is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss.”

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [3.8], the Supreme is described as follows:

*ānanda-mātram ajaraṁ purāṇam ekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā dṛśyamānam*

“The Supreme is blissful, with no tinge of unhappiness. Although He is the oldest, He never ages, and although one, He is experienced in different forms.”

As stated in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* [1.38]:

*govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūraha-talāsīnam satataṁ sa-marud-gaṇo 'haṁ paramayā stutyā toṣayāmi*

“With transcendental prayers, I and the Maruts are always trying to satisfy Lord Govinda, whose personal form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, and who is sitting amidst the celestial desire trees of Vṛndāvana.”

Lord Brahma prayed to the Supreme Lord:

*ekas tvam ātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ  
satyaḥ svayaṁ-jyotiḥ ananta ādyaḥ  
nityo 'kṣaro 'jasa-sukho nirañjanaḥ  
pūrṇādvayo mukta upādhito 'mṛtaḥ*

“You are the one Supreme Soul, the primeval Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth—self-manifested, endless and beginningless. You are eternal and infallible, perfect and complete, without any rival and free from all material designations. Your happiness can never be obstructed, nor have You any connection with material contamination. Indeed, You are the indestructible nectar of immortality.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.23]

In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.7.1] it is said:

*raso vai saḥ rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati.*

“He Himself is *rasa*, the taste or mellow of a particular relationship. And certainly one who achieves this *rasa* becomes *ānandī*, filled with bliss.”

*eṣa hy evānandayati. yadā hy evaiṣa etasmin na dṛśye 'nātmye anirukte 'nilayane 'bhayaṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ vindate 'tha so 'bhayaṁ gato bhavati.*

“A living entity becomes established in spiritual, blissful life when he fully understands that his happiness depends on spiritual self-realization, which is the basic principle of *ānanda* [bliss], and when he is eternally situated in the service of the Lord, who has no other lord above Him.”

If a living entity becomes situated in bliss simply by serving the Lord, then what to speak of the Lord Himself? And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.14.32] we find,

*yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanaṁ*

“The source of supreme transcendental bliss, the eternal, complete Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.”

*satya-jñānānantānanda-  
mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah  
asprṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā  
api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām*

The *viṣṇu-mūrtis* all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. Their great glory was not even to be touched by the *jñānīs* engaged in studying the *Upaniṣads*.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.54]

There are many, many similar verses that describe the Supreme Brahman as full of blissfulness, *ānandamaya*. Therefore as the *sūtra* under discussion states, “*ānandamaya* must be accepted to refer to the Supreme Brahman, because of the repetition in the scriptures.”

The passage of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* beginning with the verse *annād vai prajāḥ prajāyante* quoted above describe the *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, and *viññānamaya* levels of existence. Each of these levels is progressively higher than the preceding one, and after them the *ānandamaya* level, which is different in quality, is the highest of all. This will be more elaborately explained in the passage following *Sūtra* 3.3.13 of this book.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “These stages of existence [*annamaya*, *prāṇamaya* etc.] describe the conditioned conscious living entities who have fallen into the raging river of material suffering. Why has the stage of blissfulness [*ānandamaya*] been made the chief of these stages of suffering?”

To this objection I reply: These stages of existence [*annamaya*, *prāṇamaya* etc.] actually describe expansions of the energy of Brahman in the creation, which are gradually realized by the conditioned living entities. But even if you interpret *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya* etc. as descriptions of progressively subtler stages of consciousness of the conditioned living entities, there is no fault in this. The all-blissful Personality of Brahman is present in the hearts of all the suffering conditioned conscious living entities, and therefore it is perfectly appropriate to mention them together. The Vedic literatures speak in this way to make a difficult subject matter intelligible for the less intelligent common man. Just as one may point out a small, difficult-to-see star such as Arundhati [Alcor, the tiny companion of Mizar in the constellation of Ursa Major] by first pointing to its nearby easy-to-see companion, and then lead the viewer from that reference point to the tiny Arundhati, in the same way the Vedic literatures first describe the suffering-filled life of the conditioned conscious living entities, and then from that reference point teach about the all-blissful Personality of Brahman. So the *Upaniṣad* first points out Brahman as *annamaya*, the energy of the Supreme Brahman as food, then gradually proceeds to more

and more subtle descriptions of Brahman until reaching *ānandamaya*, the original Brahman, who is the source of all the others.

At this point someone may raise the following question: “Is it not, then, that the Vedic literatures mostly describe these reference-points to lead the reader indirectly to the Supreme, topics other than the Supreme Brahman, or do they mostly describe Brahman directly?”

I answer this question: Brahman is directly described throughout the Vedic literatures, because the final conclusion of the *Vedas* is Brahman. Just like a book on musical composition may begin by describing the notes of the scale and other preliminary subjects; even if the majority of the text is taken up with these preliminaries, the book as a whole is still about musical composition, because its ultimate purpose is to describe that subject to the reader. Similarly the *Vedas* describe the categories of the creation emanated by Brahman before describing Brahman Himself; therefore even though they devote so much space to subjects other than Brahman, their ultimate purpose is to describe Brahman, so actually they are describing Brahman the whole time.

For example, in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Varuṇa, upon being asked by his son to teach him about Brahman, explains to him that Brahman is the original creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the material universes. He further explains that the *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, and *vijñānamaya* stages of existence, one by one, are all Brahman. Then he explains that the *ānandamaya* stage is the final Brahman. After explaining this, Varuṇa concludes his teaching by confirming that he has spoken a true description of the Personality of Brahman. He says:

*etam ānandamayam ātmānam upasaṅkramya imān lokān  
kā māni kāma-rūpy anusāṅcarann etat sama gāyann āste*

“After leaving his material body, one who understands the supreme *ānandamaya* person leaves this material world and enters the spiritual world. All his desires become fulfilled, he attains a spiritual form according to his own wish, and he dedicates himself to glorifying that supreme *ānandamaya* person.”

This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gita* [14.26]:

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa  
bhakti-yogena sevate  
sa guṇān samatītyaitān  
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

“One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”

So even though the description of *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, etc. may superficially seem to be materialistic, because the final conclusion is that they are all energies emanated by Brahman, actually the whole passage is about Brahman. Similarly even though there may be so many apparently materialistic passages in the *Vedas* as a whole, the ultimate conclusion is that everything is emanated from Brahman; therefore the *Vedas*, as a whole, describe nothing but Brahman.

That the *ānandamaya* person in the Vedic literatures is actually the Supreme Brahman is also described in the following statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.87.17]:

*puruṣa-vidho 'nvayo 'tra caramo 'nnamyādiṣu yaḥ  
sad asataḥ param tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣāmṛtam*

“Among the manifestations known as *annamaya* and so forth, You are the ultimate one, *ānandamaya*, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming

the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, You are the reality underlying them all.”

We may note in this connection that it is not contradictory or illogical to say that the Supreme Brahman has a form. The form of the Supreme is described throughout the Vedic literatures. For example, the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.7.3] explains:

*pṛthivī śarīram*

“The material universe is the body of the Personality of Brahman.”

It is because the Personality of Brahman has a form [*śarīra*], that this book, the *Vedānta-sūtra*, is also called *Śārīraka-sūtra* [*sūtras* glorifying the Personality of Brahman, who has a form]. But as described above, the form of the Lord, being composed of transcendental bliss, is completely spiritual.

Some may say that the word *ānandamaya* does not refer to the Supreme Brahman, and that only the word *brahma-pucchaṃ* [the support of Brahman; ultimate Brahman] actually refers to Brahman. This proposal is not very intelligent, because it ignores the fact that Brahman’s energies, while different from Him, are also simultaneously one with Him.

*parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate  
svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*

“The Supreme Lord has multi-potencies, which act so perfectly that all consciousness, strength and activity are being directed solely by His will.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8]

*loke vitatam ātmānam  
lokaṃ cātmani santatam  
ubhayaṃ ca mayā vyāptam  
mayi caivobhayaṃ kṛtam*

“In this world of matter, which the conditioned soul accepts as consisting of enjoyable resources, the conditioned soul expands, thinking that he is the enjoyer of the material world. Similarly, the material world expands in the living entity as a source of enjoyment. In this way they both expand, but because they are My energies, they are both pervaded by Me. As the Supreme Lord, I am the cause of these effects, and one should know that both cause and effect, material and spiritual energies, rest in Me.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.16.52]

The Vedic scriptures regard the material energies as forms or embodiments of Brahman, because the total material energy [*mahat-tattva*] emanates from Him, and because the material energy follows His will in all respects. This view is reflected in the well-known *Antaryāmi* passage [3.7.3] of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, included in its entirety below:

“He who dwells in the earth and within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, and who rules the earth within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the water and within the water, whom the water does not know, whose body is the water, and who rules the water within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the fire and within the fire, whom the fire does not know, whose body is the fire, and who rules the fire within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the sky and within the sky, whom the sky does not know, whose body is the sky, and who rules the sky within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the air and within the air, whom the air does not know, whose body is the air, and who rules the air within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in heaven and within heaven, whom heaven does not know, whose body is heaven, and who rules heaven within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the sun and within the sun, whom the sun does not know, whose body is the sun, and who rules the sun within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in space and within space, whom space does not know, whose body is space, and who rules the space within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the moon and stars and within the moon and stars, whom the moon and stars do not know, whose body is the moon and stars, and who rules the moon and stars within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the *ākāśa* and within the *ākāśa*, whom the *ākāśa* does not know, whose body is the *ākāśa*, and who rules the *ākāśa* within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the darkness and within the darkness, whom the darkness does not know, whose body is the darkness, and who rules the darkness within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

“He who dwells in the light and within the light, whom the light does not know, whose body is the light, and who rules the light within, He is the Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal [Brahman.]

In fact the *Vedānta-sūtra* is sometimes called *Śārīraka-mīmāṃsā*, because it deals extensively with the forms or embodiments of the Supreme Brahman.

Some others may object that “The word *ānandamaya* does not refer to Brahman because the suffix *-maya* means transformation.” They think that the word *ānandamaya* [transformation of bliss] cannot refer to the Supreme Brahman because He is naturally full of bliss, and not a transformation of some pre-existing state of happiness. For this reason the word *ānandamaya* must refer to the individual conscious living entity, and not Brahman. In order to refute this argument, Śrīla Vyāsadeva speaks the following *sūtra*:

### Sūtra 1.1.13

*vikāra-śabdān neti cen na pracuryāt*

*vikāra*—transformation; *śabdāt*—from the word; *na*—not; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *pracuryāt*—because of abundance.

**If [someone argues that the Supreme Brahman cannot be the same as the *ānandamaya* person described in the *Vedas*] because the affix *-maya* means ‘transformation’, [and the Supreme Brahman is not a transformation of *ānanda*, or bliss, then I reply by saying that] because the affix *-maya* used here means ‘abundance’, this interpretation is not correct, [and therefore the word *ānandamaya* should be understood to mean “He who is filled with limitless bliss”].**

The word *ānandamaya* does not mean “he who is a transformation of bliss.” Why? Because the affix *-maya* here means ‘abundance,’ and therefore the word *ānandamaya* means “He who is filled with limitless bliss.” It occurs in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, which is a portion of the *Vedas*. The rules of Sanskrit grammar state that “the affix *-maya* may not be used to mean ‘transformation’ in *vaidika*



words of more than two syllables.” [Pāṇini 4.3.150] The word *ānanda* has three syllables, and therefore when the word *ānandamaya* appears in the *vaidika* text of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, it cannot be interpreted to mean “he who is a transformation of bliss.”

Thus *ānandamaya* does not mean mere absence of sorrow, but an overflowing abundance of transcendental bliss. The Supreme Brahman, therefore, is not only free from all suffering, but filled with limitless bliss. This is confirmed by the following statements of Vedic scripture:

*eṣa sarva-bhūtāntarātmāpahata-pāpmā divyo deva eko nārāyaṇaḥ*

“There is one Personality of Brahman: Brahman Nārāyaṇa. He is the transcendental Superconscious living entity in the hearts of all living entities, and He is completely free from all sin.” [Subala Upaniṣad]

*parāḥ parāṇām sakalā na yatra  
kleśādayaḥ sānti parāvareśaḥ*

“He is the highest of the high, the Supreme Being. Suffering is not experienced by the Personality of Brahman.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

When the affix *maya* means ‘abundance’, it also implies the meaning ‘essential nature.’ Therefore, when we use *jyotirmaya* [full of light] to mean the sun, the affix *-maya* can also be understood to mean ‘essential nature.’ In this way the word *jyotirmaya* means “that of which the essential nature is light.” In this way the word *ānandamaya* may also be interpreted to mean “He whose essential nature is full of bliss.” From all this it may be understood that the word *ānandamaya* clearly refers to the Personality of Brahman. It does not refer to the individual conscious living entity.

## Sūtra 1.1.14

*tad-hetu-vyapadeśāc ca*

*tat*—of that; *hetu*—the origin; *vypadeśāt*—because of the statement; *ca*—also.

**Because the Vedic literatures state [that the *ānandamaya* person is] the source [of bliss for others, it should be understood that the *ānandamaya* person is the Personality of Brahman, and not the individual conscious living entity].**

This is confirmed by the following statement of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.7]:

*ko hy evānyat kaḥ prāṇyāt yady eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt. eṣa evānandayati.*

“Who is that person without whom the living entities cannot feel happiness? That is the Personality of Brahman, who delights the individual conscious living entities.”

This passage explains that the Supreme Brahman is the origin of happiness for the individual conscious living entities. From this we may understand that the cause of happiness [the Personality of Brahman], and the receiver of happiness [the individual conscious living entity] must be different persons. They cannot be identical. Therefore the word *ānandamaya* refers to the Personality of Brahman only. We may also note that the word *ānanda* used in this passage of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* is identical in significance with the word *ānandamaya* in the passages quoted above.

The transcendental delight experienced in the presence of the Supreme Brahman cannot be compared with any other form of happiness, because it is pure, imperishable, ever-increasing, causeless transcendental bliss. This happiness is natural for the spiritual living entities because they are expansions or emanations from Brahman, who is a limitless ocean of such bliss. But because we have accepted a materialistic worldview in which we are separated from Brahman, we have to endure the

incompleteness and suffering of material existence. This is a spiritual disease akin to jaundice, where the patient sees everything as yellow. Similarly, we see everything including ourselves as separate from Brahman, although everything is actually connected with Him. Association with the transcendental sound vibration of the *Vedas* is the cure for this existential disease.

### Sūtra 1.1.15

*mantra-varṇikam eva ca gīyate*

*mantra*—by the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas*; *varṇikam*—described; *eva*—certainly; *ca*—also; *gīyate*—is described.

**[The same Personality of Brahman] described in the *mantra* portion of the *Vedas* is also described [as the *ānandamaya* person in the text of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*].**

The same Supreme Brahman described in the Vedic *mantra*, *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*, “The Supreme Brahman has no limits. He is eternal and full of knowledge,” is also described in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* by the word *ānandamaya*. In this way the above *sūtra* explains that the word *ānandamaya* does not refer to the individual living entity. Further, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* begins with the declaration:

*brahma-vid āpnoti param*

“One who understands the Supreme Brahman attains the Supreme Brahman.”

*anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram  
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvam yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ*

“Anyone who quits his body, at the end of life, remembering Me, attains immediately to My nature; and there is no doubt of this.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.5]

*asevayāyam prakṛter guṇānām  
jñānena vairāgya-vijṛmbhitena  
yogena mayy arpitayā ca bhaktyā  
mām pratyag-ātmānam ihāvarundhe*

“Thus by not engaging in the service of the modes of material nature but by developing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, knowledge in renunciation, and by practicing *yoga*, in which the mind is always fixed in devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one achieves My association in this very life, for I am the Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.25.27]

These passages explain that the individual living entity worships the Supreme Brahman and then attains the association of that Supreme Brahman. This is the same Supreme Brahman previously described in the *mantra*, *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*. This is the same Supreme Brahman described by the word *ānandamaya*, the same Supreme Brahman described in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* in the passage beginning *tasmād vā etasmāt*:

“Higher than the *vijñānamaya* stage is the *ānandamaya* stage of existence. The *ānandamaya* stage is a person whose head is pleasure [*priya*], whose right side is joy [*moda*], whose left side is delight [*pramoda*], and whose identity is bliss [*ānanda*]. The *ānandamaya* is Brahman.”

Because the Supreme Brahman is the object of attainment for the individual conscious living entity, and because the object of attainment and the attainer must be two distinct entities, they cannot be identical; the Supreme Brahman and the individual living entities must be distinct persons, and

therefore the word *ānandamaya* refers only to the Personality of Brahman and not to the individual living entities.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “If the Supreme Brahman described in the Vedic *mantras* were different from the individual living entity, then the individual living entities could not be the *ānandamaya* person described in the scriptures. The actual fact is that the Supreme Brahman and the individual living entities are identical. The Vedic *mantras* state that when the individual conscious living entity is free from ignorance and liberated from material bondage, then he become identical with the Supreme Brahman.”

To answer this objection, Śrīla Vyāsadeva speaks the following *sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.1.16

*netaro 'nupapatteḥ*

*na*—not; *itaraḥ*—the other; *upapatteḥ*—because it is illogical.

**The other person [individual living entity] is not described [in the *mantra satyam jñānam anantam brahma*,] because [such an interpretation of the *mantra*] is illogical.**

The *itara* [other person] mentioned in this *sūtra* is the individual living entity. This *sūtra*, therefore, states that the individual conscious living entity, even in the liberated condition, cannot be the Supreme Person described in the *mantra, satyam jñānam anantam brahma*. This is confirmed by the following statement of Vedic literature:

*so 'śnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipāścitā*

“The liberated conscious living entity enjoys the fulfillment of all his desires in the company of the omniscient Supreme Brahman.”

In this passage the difference between the liberated conscious living entity and the Supreme Brahman is described in the words “He enjoys in the company of the Supreme Brahman.” The word *vipāścit* means “He whose consciousness [*cit*] sees [*paśyati*] the great variety of that which exists [*vividham*]. The word *paśya* is changed to *paś* in this word by the grammatical formula *prśodarādi-gaṇa* [Pāṇini 6.3.109]. The liberated individual conscious living entity attains the association of the Personality of Brahman, who is expert at enjoying many varieties of transcendental bliss, and the individual conscious living entity enjoys with Him, fulfilling all his desires.

The word *asnute* should be understood in this context to mean ‘enjoys’. The verb *aś* means ‘to enjoy’, and although we would expect it to be conjugated in the *parasmaipada*, [*aśnāti*], in this passage it is conjugated in the *ātmanepada* [*aśnute*]. The reason for this is explained by Pāṇini in the *sūtra, vyatyayo bahulam iti chandasi tathā smṛteḥ* [3.1.85].

The Personality of Brahman is naturally the Supreme Enjoyer, and the individual conscious living entity is His subordinate in the matter of enjoyment. Still, the Personality of Brahman glorifies the liberated conscious living entities when He says:

*mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāḥ  
sādhavaḥ sama-darśanāḥ  
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktyā  
sat-striyaḥ sat-patīm yathā*

“As chaste women bring their gentle husbands under control by service, the pure devotees, who are equal to everyone and completely attached to Me in the core of the heart, bring Me under their full control.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.66]

## Sūtra 1.1.17

*bheda-vyapadeśāc ca*

*bheda*—difference; *vyapadeśāt*—because of the statement; *ca*—also.

**[The Personality of Brahman and the individual conscious living entity are] different, because the Vedic literature teaches this fact.**

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [7.1] explains:

*raso vai saḥ rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati.*

“When one understands the Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of pleasure Kṛṣṇa, he actually becomes transcendently blissful.”

This passage clearly shows the difference between the liberated individual conscious living entity and the Personality of Brahman, whom the Vedic *mantras* describe as *ānandamaya*, and who is the transcendental nectar attained by the individual conscious living entity by following the Vedic system of self-realization. This difference is also described in the following statement of *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.6]:

*brahmaiva san brahmāpnoti*

“After becoming Brahman, the individual conscious living entity attains Brahman.”

This statement does not mean that after liberation the individual conscious living entity becomes non-different from the Supreme Brahman, but rather the liberated conscious living entity becomes similar to Brahman in quality and consciousness, and in this condition meets Brahman and attains His association. This is confirmed by the following statement of *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* [3.1.31]:

*nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyaṁ upaiti*

“This liberated conscious living entity becomes like the Personality of Brahman.”

Also, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.2], the Personality of Brahman declares:

*idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharmyam āgatāḥ*

“By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature, which is like My own nature.”

In this way the Vedic literatures teach us that the liberated conscious living entities become qualitatively similar the Personality of Brahman. However they do not state that the living entities become equal to Brahman in every way, especially quantitatively. This concept is the foundation of the philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference between the *jīva* and Brahman, known as *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*. The living entities are qualitatively similar to, and quantitatively different from Brahman.

The principle of material creation is the sum total of the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance—technically called the *pradhāna*. The Vedic hymns *sarvaṁ hy etad brahma* [*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 1.1.2], *tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpam annaṁ ca jāyate* [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.10], and, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.3], *mama yonir mahad brahma* indicate that everything in the material world is a manifestation of Brahman; and although the effects are manifested in combinations and permutations of three different modes, they are nondifferent from the cause. Therefore those who, according to atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy, accept *prakṛti*, the manifested material nature, as the original cause of the cosmic manifestation are incorrect in their conclusion. The material nature has no separate existence without the Lord.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [3.26.10] states,

śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
yat tat tri-guṇam avyaktam  
nityam sad-asad-ātmakam  
pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prāhur  
aviśeṣam viśeṣavat

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “The unmanifested eternal combination of the three modes is called *pradhāna*, and it is the cause of the manifest state. It is called *prakṛti* when in the manifested stage of existence.”

*Pradhāna* is the subtle, undifferentiated sum total of all material elements. Although the elements are undifferentiated, the potential to manifest the total material elements is contained in *pradhāna*. When the total material elements are manifested by the interaction of the three modes of material nature with material time, the manifestation is called *prakṛti*. Impersonalists say that Brahman is without variegatedness and differentiation. Some philosophers say that *pradhāna* is the Brahman stage of matter, but actually the Brahman stage is different from *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is distinct from Brahman because in Brahman there is no existence of the material modes of nature.

*Pradhāna* is the sum total of all material elements before the creation, when the reaction of the total elements with time does not take place, and the interactions of cause and effect are potential, or not yet manifested (*avyakta*). *Pradhāna* is separate from the time element because the time element contains actions and reactions, creation and annihilation. Nor is it the *jīva*, or marginal potency of materially designated, conditioned living entities, because the designations of the living entities are not eternal. One adjective used in this connection is *nitya*, which indicates eternity; the principle of the material creation is eternal, but the manifestation is temporary because it is controlled by the Supreme Lord in His form of time. Therefore the *pradhāna* is a potential state of material nature immediately previous to its manifestation.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is not the *pradhāna* feature of the mode of material goodness [*sattva-guṇa*] the actual origin of the *ānandamaya* person?” Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers this objection in the following *sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.1.18

kāmāc ca nānumānāpekṣā

*kāmāt*—because of desire; *ca*—also; *na*—not; *anumāna*—to the theory; *apekṣā*—in relation.

**[The *ānandamaya* person] cannot be [a product of the mode of material goodness], because [the mode of goodness is insentient and desireless, whereas the *ānandamaya* person] is filled with desires.**

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* explains:

so ‘kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeya

“The Personality of Brahman desired: Let Me become many. Let Me father many living entities.”

In this way the *śruti-śāstra* explains that the universe was created by the desire of the *ānandamaya* person. Because the *ānandamaya* person is thus filled with desires, it is not possible for the *pradhāna* mode of material goodness, which is lifeless, insentient, and desireless, to be that *ānandamaya* person.

Many people think that simply by performing pious activities and cultivating the qualities of goodness such as nonviolence, charity, scriptural knowledge and so on, they can attain the highest destination. While these qualities of the mode of goodness are certainly praiseworthy and recommended, they are preliminary to actual self-realization, therefore they cannot elevate us to the highest destination because the *ānandamaya* person or Brahman is actually transcendental to all material qualities, even goodness.

Personality, individuality, cognition, desire, emotion, will, initiative, creativity, thought, reason, memory, imagination, life energy, activity, enjoyment and so on are all actually symptoms of the spirit soul or living entity. The proof of this is that when the living entity leaves the material body at the time of death, all these subtle qualities disappear simultaneously. Because these qualities belong to the living entity and not the body, they are actually spiritual. Since Brahman is the source of the spiritual living entities, we would naturally expect to find the same qualities in Him, but in unlimited abundance.

So all the most desirable qualities of the living entity are spiritual, and not a manifestation of the modes of material nature, which are inert and mechanical. Similarly the qualities of Brahman are spiritual, not material. Even though the qualities of goodness—purity, learning, self-discipline and so on—may be desirable, from the point of view of the *Vedas* it is not for their own sake, but because they are necessary-but-not-sufficient preliminaries to self-realization.

## Sūtra 1.1.19

*asminn asya ca tad-yogam śāsti*

*asmin*—in that *ānandamaya* person; *asya*—of the individual conscious living entity; *ca*—also; *tat*—of fearlessness; *yogam*—contact; *śāsti*—the Vedic scriptures teach.

**[The *ānandamaya* person cannot be manifested from the *pradhāna* mode of material goodness, because] the Vedic scriptures teach that contact with the *ānandamaya* person brings fearlessness [to the individual conscious living entity].**

The *śruti-śāstra* teaches that by taking shelter of the *ānandamaya* person, the individual conscious living entity attains fearlessness, and by declining to take shelter of Him, the conscious living entity becomes plagued with all kinds of fear. This confirmed by the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.7.2] in the passage beginning with the words *yadā hy eva*:

“When he finds repose and freedom from fear in that which is invisible, incorporeal, undefined, unsupported, then he has obtained fearlessness. For if he makes the slightest separation from Him, there is fear for him. But that fear exists only for those who think themselves wise, not for the true enlightened sage.”

On the other hand, contact with the material nature brings fear to the individual conscious living entities. The material nature does not bring a condition of fearlessness to the living entities, and for this reason it is not possible that the *pradhāna* mode of material goodness is the *ānandamaya* person.

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād  
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ  
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ  
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

“Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency for illusion, called *māyā*. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service

of the Lord under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.37]

Therefore, the *ānandamaya* person is the Personality of Brahman, Hari. The *ānandamaya* person is not the individual conscious living entity or the material nature, because neither of them can deliver us from fear. But if the living entity takes shelter of the Vedic process under competent guidance, he can attain complete fearlessness.

## **Adhikaraṇa 7: The Nature of the Supreme Person Within**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The wonderful *puruṣa* described as follows in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.6-7 is Brahman:

“The *devī* Sarasvatī called Ṛk verily pervades this earth; the *deva* Vāyu called Sāman pervades fire; therefore, the Sāman is sung as resting on the Ṛk. *Sā* is this earth, and *Ama* is fire and that makes *Sāma* [Vedic hymn sung as a sacrificial offering].

“The *devī* Sarasvatī as presiding over sky is verily Ṛk, the *deva* Vāyu as presiding over air is Sāman. This Sāman is refuted in that Ṛk. The sky is *Sā* and the air is *Ama*, and thus the *Sāma* is made.

“The heaven Sarasvatī is verily Ṛk, and the sun Vāyu is Sāman, this Sāman is sung as based on the Ṛk, heaven is *Sā* and the sun is *Ama*, thus is *Sāma* made.

“The *devī* Sarasvatī dwelling in the stars is verily Ṛk and the *deva* Vāyu in the moon is Sāman. This Sāman is refuted on that Ṛk. *Sā* is the stars, *Ama* the moon, and thus *Sāma* is made.

“Now that which is the white light of the sun indeed is Ṛk; again that which is the blue, exceeding dark light of the sun, that verily is Sāman. Thus Sāman [darkness] is refuted in that Ṛk [light]; therefore the Sāman is sung as refuted on the Ṛk. Now the *Sā* is the white light of the sun; and the blue and deep dark is *Ama*, and that makes *Sāma*.

“Now that Being residing within Vāyu and Sarasvatī who is seen in the sun in meditation as full of intense joy, with joy as beard, joy as hair, joy altogether to the very tips of His nails,

“His two eyes are like a fresh red lotus. His mystic Name is Ut, for He has risen [*udita*] above all sins. He who knows this verily also rises above all sins.

“Ṛk and Sāma [Sarasvatī and chief Vāyu] are the minstrels of the Lord; therefore he [the chanter in a Vedic sacrifice] is called Udgātri. He, the Lord called Ut, is the ruler of the worlds above the plane of heaven. He rules those words and awards the desired objects to the devas. This is *adhidaivata* [cosmological conception].

“Now the psychological conception [*adhiātmika*]. The Ṛk is speech, and the Sāma is the organ of respiration. Thus respiration is seen to rest in the organ of speech. Therefore, the Sāman is sung as resting on the Ṛk. *Sā* is the organ of speech, and *Ama* is the organ of respiration. That makes *Sāma*.

“The eye is the Ṛk, and the *jīva* is the Sāman. This Sāman is seen to rest on the Ṛk, therefore the Sāman is sung as resting on the Ṛk. *Sā* is the eye, and *Ama* is the *jīva*; and that makes *Sāma*.

“The ear is the Ṛk and the mind is the Sāman. This Sāman is seen to rest on the Ṛk; therefore, the Sāman is sung as resting on the Ṛk. *Sā* is the ear, and *Ama* is the mind. That makes *Sāma*.

“Now the white light of the eye is indeed *Ṛk*, and the blue exceeding dark light of the eye is *Sāman*. This *Sāman* is refuged on that *Ṛk*. Therefore the *Sāman* is sung as refuged on the *Ṛk*. *Sā* is the white light of the eye, and *Ama* is the blue exceeding dark light, and that makes *Sāma*.

“Now the person who is seen in the eye is the all-wise, all-harmonious and uplifter of all. He is all-adorable, He is all-full. The form of the person in the eye is the same as the form of the other person in the sun, the minstrels of the one are the minstrels of the other, the name *Ut* of the one, is the name of the other.

“He is the Lord who rules the worlds beneath the physical, and awards all the wishes of men. Therefore all who sing any song, really sing to Him, and thus they actually attain all wealth from Him.

“Now he who knowing this sings a *Sāman*, sings to both, he really sings as if inspired by Him, and obtains the worlds beyond that and the wishes of the *devas*.

“Now through this alone he obtains all the lower worlds and the desires of the human beings. Therefore the *Udgātri* who knows this should say: ‘To accomplish what particular desire of yours, O *Yajamāna*, shall I sing?’ For he, who knowing this, sings out the *Sāman*, is able to accomplish the desires of his *Yajamāna* through his song, yea, through his song.”

In the Vedic conception of cosmology, everything is living, personal and intelligent. The universe is not some vast clockwork machine, wound up at the time of creation and now slowly running down according to the laws of thermodynamics. The personal form of the Lord, and the impersonal energy of the Lord known as the *brahmajyoti*, are clearly explained in the *Vedas* as the actual causes of the creation, maintenance and ultimate destruction of the cosmic creation. The *brahmajyoti* or effulgence of the personal form of the Lord is compared to the radiation of the sun. The sunshine may expand all over the universe, but the source of the sunshine is the deity known as *Sūrya-nārāyaṇa*, who lives within the sun and empowers it.

*sva-dhiṣṇyaṁ pratapan prāṇo  
bahiś ca pratapaty asau  
evam virājaṁ pratapaṁs  
tapaty antar bahiḥ pumān*

“The sun illuminates both internally and externally by expanding its radiation; similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by expanding His universal form, maintains everything in the creation both internally and externally.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.6.17]

A power plant requires so many intelligent engineers and trained technicians to construct and operate. Do we really think that a great source of radiant energy like the sun is simply mechanistic happenstance? Therefore the Vedic *brāhmaṇas* use the *mantra* mentioned in the *Rg Veda*, generally known as *Gāyatrī mantra*, to worship the Supreme *Nārāyaṇa* situated within the sun. The physical sun that gives light and warmth to the earth is simply a reflection of the rays of the *brahmajyoti* or spiritual radiance of the Lord’s transcendental body.

Although the reflected energy of the Lord displays various illusions to the eyes of persons afflicted with a poor fund of transcendental knowledge, the sane person knows clearly that the Lord can act by His different energies, even from far, far beyond our vision, just as fire can diffuse heat and light from a distant place, or microwaves can transfer power invisibly. In the medical science of the ancient sages, known as the *Āyur-veda*, there is definite acceptance of the Lord’s supremacy in the following words:

*jagad-yoner anicchasya  
cid-ānandaika-rūpiṇaḥ*



*pumso 'sti prakṛtir nityā  
praticchāyeva bhāsvataḥ*

*acetanāpi caitanya-  
yogena paramātmānaḥ  
akarod viśvam akhīlam  
anityam nāṭakākṛtim*

“There is one Supreme Person who is the progenitor of this cosmic manifestation and whose energy acts as *prakṛti*, or the manifested material nature, dazzling like a reflection. By such illusory action of *prakṛti*, even dead matter is caused to move by the influence of the living energy of the Lord, and the material world appears like a dramatic performance to the ignorant eyes.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: The ignorant person, therefore, may even be a scientist or physiologist in the drama of *prakṛti*, while the sane transcendentalist knows perfectly well that *prakṛti* or material nature is merely the external illusory energy of the Lord, and the internal living conscious spiritual energy is actually the cause of everything, including energetic manifestations like the sun. The passage of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* quoted above explains:

*atha yā so 'ntar ādityo hiraṇmayāḥ puruṣo dṛśyate hiraṇya-śmaśrur hiraṇya-keśa aprāṇakhāt  
sarva eva suvarṇas tasya yathā kapyasaṁ puṇḍarīkam evam akṣiṇi tasyodeti nāma sa eṣa  
sarvebhyaḥ pāpmābhyaḥ udita udeti hā vai sarvebhyaḥ pāpmābhyo ya evaṁ veda tasya ṛk  
sāma ca gesnau tasmād udīgithas tasmāt tv evodgataitasya hi gāthā sa eṣa ye cāmuṣmat  
paraṇco lokas teṣāṁ ceṣṭe deva-kāmānām cety adhidaivatam... athādhyātmam atha ya eṣo  
'ntar-akṣiṇi puruṣo dṛśyate saiva ṛk tat sāma tad ukthaṁ tad yajus tad brahma tasyaitasya tad  
eva rūpaṁ yad amuṣya rūpam. yāv amuṣya gesnau tau gesnau yan nāma tan nāma.*

“Within the sun-globe is a golden person with golden hair, a golden beard, and a body golden from His fingernails to all His limbs. His eyes are like lotus flowers. He is above all sin. One who understands Him also becomes situated above all sin. The *Ṛg* and *Sāma Vedas* sing His glories. From Him the highest spiritual planets, where the demigods desire to go, have become manifested. This is the golden person present among the demigods... Now I shall describe the person within the human mind and heart. Within the eyes a wonderful person may be seen. The *Ṛg*, *Sāma*, and *Yājur Vedas* glorify Him. He is identical with the golden person who resides in the sun.”

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Someone may doubt: “Is this an individual conscious living entity who by great piety and spiritual knowledge has attained this exalted position, or is this the Personality of Brahman, who appears as the all-pervading Superconscious living entity? Because this person has a form and various human-like features, He must be a pious conscious living entity. By his piety and spiritual knowledge he has become able to become the great controller of demigods and human beings who fulfills their desires and grants them the results of their actions.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva addresses these views by giving the *siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion] in the following *sūtra*.

## **Sūtra 1.1.20**

*antas tad-dharmopadeśāt*

*antah*—within; *tat*—of Him; *dharmā*—nature; *upadeśāt*—because of the instruction.

**The person within [the sun and the eye is the Personality of Brahman], because the Vedic literatures explain that His nature fits the description of Brahman.**

The person within the sun and the eye is the Personality of Brahman, who is present everywhere as the original Superconscious living entity. This person is not the individual conscious living entity. Why? Because the Vedic literatures describe Him as being sinless and possessing all the qualities of the Personality of Brahman. He is free from all sin and all *karma*. The slightest fragrance of *karma* cannot touch Him. This is not possible for the individual conscious living entities, who remain subject to the laws of *karma*.

*viśuddham kevalam jñānam  
pratyak samyag avasthitam  
satyam pūrṇam anādy-antam  
nirguṇam nityam advayam*

“The Personality of Godhead is pure, being free from all contaminations of material tinges. He is the Absolute Truth and the embodiment of full and perfect knowledge. He is all-pervading, without beginning or end, and without rival.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.40]

The individual conscious living entity does not fit the description of this person within the sun and the eye in many other ways as well. For example, the individual conscious living entity is not the fulfiller of the desires of the living entities, nor is he the awarder of the fruits of action, nor is he the object of the worship of the living entities.

At this point the impersonalists may raise the following objection: “Because the person within the sun and the eye is described as having a body, therefore He must be an individual conscious living entity, for the Supreme Brahman has no body.”

To this objection I reply: This is not necessarily so. The *puruṣa-sūkta* prayers [Rg Veda 10.90] and many other Vedic verses describe the transcendental body of the Personality of Brahman.

*om namo bhagavate mahā-puruṣāya mahānubhāvāya mahā-vibhūti-pataye sakala-sātvata-  
parivṛḍha-nikara-kara-kamala-kuṇḍmalopalālita-caraṇāravinda-yugala parama-parameṣṭhin  
namas te.*

“O transcendental Lord, who are situated in the topmost planet of the spiritual world, Your two lotus feet are always massaged by a multitude of the best devotees with their lotus-bud hands. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, complete with six opulences. You are the Supreme Person mentioned in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* prayers. You are the most perfect, self-realized master of all mystic power. Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto You.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.16.25]

The Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad also describes the Supreme Brahman’s transcendental body in the following words:

*vedhāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt*

“I know that Personality of Brahman, whose form is transcendental to all material conceptions of darkness.”

The difference between the form of an ordinary living entity and the body of the Lord is that His body is never material. The Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad [3.8-9] substantiates this as follows:

*vedāham etaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam  
āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt*

*tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti  
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya*

*yasmāt param nāparam asti kiñcid  
yasmān nāñīyo no jyāyo 'sti kiñcit  
vrkṣa iva stabdho divi tiṣṭhaty ekas  
tenedaṁ pūrṇaṁ puruṣeṇa sarvam*

“I know that Supreme Personality of Godhead who is transcendental to all material conceptions of darkness. Only he who knows Him can transcend the bonds of birth and death. There is no way for liberation other than this knowledge of that Supreme Person. There is no truth superior to that Supreme Person, because He is the supermost. He is smaller than the smallest, and He is greater than the greatest. He is situated as a silent tree, and He illumines the transcendental sky, and as a tree spreads its roots, He spreads His extensive energies.”

The transcendental form of the Lord is described in many other places in the scriptures. But as stated in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.2.23],

*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas  
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām*

“Only one who is fully surrendered and engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can understand the Supreme Lord as He is.”

Therefore neither the materialistic scientists nor the impersonalist speculators can actually see the Lord, because being of atheistic temperament, they do not perform devotional service, which is the process for revealing Him as He really is.

## **Sūtra 1.1.21**

*bheda-vyapadeśāc cānyaḥ*

*bheda*—difference; *vyapadeśāt*—because of the statement; *ca*—also; *anyaḥ*—another.

**[The Personality of Brahman is] different [from the individual conscious living entity] because this doctrine is taught in all Vedic literatures.**

The golden person within the sun is not the solar deity, the individual conscious living entity who thinks the sun planet is his own body, but rather that golden person is the Personality of Brahman, the Superconscious living entity who is present in every atom. This is confirmed by the following statement of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*:

*ya āditye tiṣṭhann ādityād antaro yam ādityo  
na veda yasyādityaḥ śarīraṁ ya ādityam antaro  
yamayatya eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ*

“That person situated within the sun, who is not the sun-god, whom the sun-god does not know, who manifests the sun planet as His own body, who controls the sun planet from within, that person is the immortal Personality of Brahman who is present within the heart of every living entity as the Superconscious living entity.”

From this description we may understand that the golden person within the sun is not the individual conscious living entity who is the sun-god, but the Personality of Brahman. Both this passage and the previous quoted passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* agree on this point.

The ordinary living entities cannot perceive the effulgent Supreme Person within the sun because their material vision is overwhelmed by the glaring radiance of the sun planet. Yet without the presence of the Lord, the energetic source of all emanations, the sun planet could not remain steady in its radiation over millions of years. The Lord can be seen only by the devotees whose minds are controlled by the process of devotional service. Lord Śiva prays:

*namo namo 'niruddhāya  
hṛṣīkeśendriyātmane  
namaḥ paramahamśāya  
pūrṇāya nibhṛtātmane*

“My Lord, as the supreme directing Deity known as Aniruddha, You are the master of the senses and the mind. I therefore offer my obeisances unto You again and again. You are known as Ananta as well as Saṅkarṣaṇa because of Your ability to destroy the whole creation by the blazing fire from Your mouth.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.24.36]

*Hṛṣīkeśendriyātmane*: The mind is the director of the senses, and Lord Aniruddha is the director of the mind. In order to execute devotional service, one has to fix his mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa; therefore Lord Śiva prays to the controller of the mind, Lord Aniruddha, to be pleased to help him engage his mind on the lotus feet of the Lord. It is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.34]:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto  
mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru  
mām evaiśyasi yuktvaivam  
ātmānam mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.”

The mind has to be engaged in meditation on the lotus feet of the Lord in order to execute devotional service. It is also stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* [15.15],

*mattāḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*

“From Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness.”

Thus if Lord Aniruddha is pleased, He can help the mind engage in the service of the Lord. It is also indicated in this verse that Lord Aniruddha is the sun-god by virtue of His expansions. Since the predominating deity of the sun is an expansion of Lord Aniruddha, Lord Śiva also prays to the sun-god in this verse, and this is also why the *brāhmaṇas* use the Gāyatrī *mantra* of the *R̥g Veda* to worship the Supreme Nārāyaṇa within the sun. Lord Kṛṣṇa, by His quadruple expansion of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, is the Lord of all psychic action: thinking, feeling, willing and acting. Lord Śiva prays to Lord Aniruddha as the sun-god, who is also the controlling deity of the external material elements constituting the material body. Therefore in the *Āyur-veda*, those who desire health are also instructed to worship the sun.

The sun-god is addressed above as *nibhṛtātmane*, which indicates that he always maintains the various planets by providing rainfall. By emanating his dazzling rays, the sun-god evaporates water from the seas and oceans, forms the water into clouds and distributes it. When there is sufficient rainfall, grains are produced, and these grains maintain living entities in every planet. The sun-god is also addressed herein as *pūrṇa*, or complete, because the sun-god has been supplying heat and light without diminution for millions and millions of years since the creation of the universe. He is also addressed as *paramahamśa*. The word *paramahamśa* is applied to persons who are completely cleansed. When there is sufficient sunshine, the mind remains clear and transparent—in other words, the sun-god helps the

living entity to situate his mind on the platform of pure consciousness. Thus Lord Śiva prays to Lord Aniruddha to be kind upon him, so that his mind will always be in the perfect state of cleanliness and engaged in the devotional service of the Lord. Just as fire sterilizes all unclean things, the sun-god also keeps everything sterilized, especially dirty things within the mind, enabling one to attain elevation to the platform of spiritual understanding.

## **Adhikaraṇa 8: Ākāśa Refers to Brahman**

*Viṣaya* [thesis or statement]: The *ākāśa* mentioned in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.9 refers to Brahman. The entire passage is quoted below:

Then Sālāvatya asked, “What is the goal of Brahmā?” “The all-luminous [*ākāśa*] Viṣṇu,” replied Pravāhana, “For all these mighty beings arise from the All-luminous and again set in the All-luminous. The All-luminous is greater than all these; the All-luminous is their great refuge. He indeed is higher than the highest, the Udgītha, the Infinite.

“He who meditates on the Udgītha as greater than the great, knowing Him thus to be the supreme goal, the greater than the great becomes his protector, and he obtains the worlds that are greater than the great [*Vaikunṭha*].

“Those among Mankind who know this Udgītha,” said Atidhanvan, the son of Śunaka to his disciple Udara Śāṇḍilya, “will live for the entire length of the *yuga* in which they get this knowledge, and for that whole time the Supreme Brahman will be their life in this world, and also in the next world, yea in the next world.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: In Vedic cosmology, *ākāśa*, sometimes unfortunately mistranslated ‘ether’, actually means space. In the Vedic literature, *ākāśa* is sometimes translated ‘sky’ or ‘air,’ but it is most often used in the sense of the Vedic cosmological element which is equivalent to the Western scientific concept of space-time. Normally we do not think of space as a substance, but from the transcendental point of view of the *Vedas*, material space-time is a temporary, artificial manifestation unique to the material creation. It is of central importance because of course, nothing can exist without space. Distance, movement and thus energy, force and work all require space. Therefore *ākāśa*, space is an even more fundamental concept than energy or matter. *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.6] says,

*yathākāśa-sthito nityam  
vāyuh sarvatra-go mahān  
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
mat-sthānīty upadhāraya*

“As the mighty wind, blowing everywhere, always rests in *ākāśa* [ethereal space], know that in the same manner all beings rest in Me.”

One clue to the meaning of *ākāśa* is that it is described as the medium of *śabda*, or subtle sound. *Śabda* is the vibration of the element *ākāśa*, the ethereal space of the sky. Space is the medium of subtle vibrations like radio signals, light, cosmic rays and so on. Although modern scientists do not count ethereal space as a material element as do Vedic sages, they agree it is not a void, but rather a sea of energetic vibrations in which we and all other things in the universe exist. Some scientists suppose there is a fundamental vibration that permeates the universe, holding all matter together. The *Vedas* describe a fundamental vibration, called *śabda-brahma* or transcendental sound, that originates in the spiritual sky and is the basis of creation. We also experience subtle sound vibration in the internal conversations of the mind. This mental sound is transmitted by *ākāśa*.

The passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* quoted in full above states:

*asya lokasya kā gatiṃ iti ākāśa itihovāca  
sarvāṇi hā vā imāṇi bhūtāṇy ākāśād eva  
samutpadyante. ākāśam pratyastam yānty ākāśaḥ parāyanam iti.*

“He asked: ‘What is the ultimate destination of all living entities?’ He replied: ‘*Ākāśa* is the ultimate destination. All living entities and all material elements have emanated from *ākāśa*, and they will again enter into *ākāśa*.’”

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: What is the meaning of the word *ākāśa* here? Does it mean the element ether [sky or space], or does it mean the Supreme Brahman? The opposing argument is that “The word *ākāśa* here means the element ether or space, because air and the other elements evolve from it. Indeed, the zero-point energy of space is the origin of all the other energies and elements.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument by stating the *siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion] in the following *sūtra*.

## Sūtra 1.1.22

*ākāśas tal-lingāt*

*ākāśaḥ*—the word *ākāśa*; *tat*—of Him; *lingat*—because of the qualities.

**The word *ākāśa* [in the Vedic literature refers to] the Supreme Brahman, for the description [of *ākāśa* aptly fits the description of the qualities of Brahman.]**

The word *ākāśa* here refers to Brahman and not the material element ether. Why? Because the *ākāśa* described here has all the characteristics of Brahman. The *ākāśa* described here is the source from which the material elements emanate, the maintainer who sustains them, and the ultimate refuge into which they enter at the time of cosmic annihilation. That is a perfect description of Brahman.

The scriptures explain that *sarvāṇi hā vā imāṇi bhūtāṇi*: “All material elements have emanated from *ākāśa*.” Because ether is one of the material elements, it is included in the word *sarvāṇi* [all the elements]. It is not the independent origin of the causal chain, but merely one of the links. For this reason it cannot be the *ākāśa* that is the source of all the elements, including ether. The use of the word *eva* [certainly] in this context reinforces the interpretation that *ākāśa* refers to Brahman because *eva* implies “there is no other cause”. For this reason *ākāśa* cannot refer to the material element ether or space, because space is not a cause but an effect.

For example, clay is the origin from which clay pots are produced, and other material substances are the origins of other objects. But all these are not primal origins, they are merely intermediate steps in a great causal chain. By using the word *eva* [the sole cause] the text clearly refers to the primal, uncaused cause, Brahman, and not ether or any other particular intermediate stage in the causal chain. The Vedic literatures describe Brahman as the master of all potencies and the source of all forms, and therefore, because the *ākāśa* is described by the word *eva* as the sole cause, it can refer only to the primal cause Brahman and not the material element ether. Although the word *ākāśa* generally means ether or space in ordinary usage, in this context the secondary meaning “Brahman” is far more appropriate.

## Adhikaraṇa 9: Prāṇa Refers to Brahman

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The *prāṇa* mentioned in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.10-11 refers to Brahman. The entire passage is quoted below:

When the crops in the land of the Kurus were destroyed by hailstones, Uśāsti Cākrāyana lived with his young wife by begging at Ibhya-grāma. Seeing the lord of Ibhya eating beans, he begged some from him.

The master of the elephants said to Uśāsti “I have no more except these that are placed before me for eating.” Uśāsti said, “Give me some of those.” He gave him some of those and said, “Here is some water to drink in this water-bag.” Uśāsti said, “If I drink what has already been drunk by another, I shall drink impure water.” The master of elephants said, “Are not these beans impure also, as I am eating from them?”

Uśāsti replied, “No, because without eating them I cannot live; while drinking your water is not an absolute necessity, for water may be obtained anywhere.” After eating, Uśāsti brought the remnants to his wife. But she had already eaten, therefore she put them away.

The next morning after leaving his bed Uśāsti said, “Alas, if we could get a little food, we could get much wealth, because that king is going to offer a sacrifice, and he may choose me for the post of priest.”

His wife replied, “Alas, O husband, there is nothing in the house besides these stale beans that you brought yesterday.” Uśāsti after eating the beans, went to the big sacrifice that was being performed. There he sat down next to the Udgatrīna priests who were singing hymns in the Astava ceremony. Then he said to the Prastotar priest, “O Prastotar, if you sing the *prastāva* without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off. O Udgātar, if you sing the *udgithā* without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off. O Pratihartar, if you sing the *pratihāra* without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.” Then they indeed stopped and sat down silent.

Then the Sacrificer said to him, “Sir, I desire to know who you are.” He replied, “I am Uśāsti the son of Cākrāyana.” The king said, “I had made up my mind, Sir, to appoint you alone to all these priestly offices; but not having found you, I have appointed others. But now that I have found you, I elect you to all these priestly offices.”

“Very well,” said Uśāsti “but do not send these others away, but let them indeed sing the sacred hymns under my direction. And promise that you pay me as much wealth as you would have given to them collectively.” The Sacrificer said, “Let it be so.”

Then the Prastotar priest approached him respectfully, saying, “Sir, you said to me ‘Prastotar, if you sing the *prastāva* without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.’ Who is this Deity of whom you speak?”

Uśāsti replied: “It is Viṣṇu as the chief *prāṇa*, the great breath. From *prāṇa* all the material elements have emanated, and into *prāṇa* they enter at the end. This is the Deity belonging to the creation [*prastāva*]. If after being warned by me you had sung the *prastāva* hymn without knowing that Deity, your head would have fallen off.”

Then the Udgatrī priest approached him respectfully, saying, “Sir, you said to me ‘Udgatrī, if you sing the *udgithā* without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.’ Who is this Deity of whom you speak?”

Uśāsti replied: “The sun. It is Viṣṇu residing in the sun who is the Deity of the *udgithā*. Verily all creatures sing His praises because He is the best and the highest. He alone is the Deity belonging to the *udgithā*. If after being warned by me you had sung the Udgitha hymn without knowing that Deity, your head would have fallen off.”

Then the Pratihatri priest approached him respectfully, saying, “Sir, you said to me ‘Pratihatri, if you sing the *pratihāra* without knowing the Deity that belongs to it, your head will fall off.’ Who is this Deity of whom you speak?”

Uśāsti replied: “It is Viṣṇu residing in the food who is the Deity of the *pratihāra*. Verily all creatures eat food, and live thereby because Viṣṇu lives in the food and maintains them. He alone is the Deity belonging to the *pratihāra*. If after being warned by me you had sung the *pratihāra* [guardian] hymn without knowing that Deity, your head would have fallen off.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: The Vedic conception of *prāṇa* is very important. *Prāṇa* is sometimes poorly translated as ‘subtle airs’ or ‘breath,’ but it is actually closer to Chinese *chi* or Japanese *ki*, the subtle life energy that runs through the body under the direction of the soul. *Prāṇa* means subtle life energy, and although Western science does not want to admit the existence of *prāṇa*, it has been shown without a doubt that medical treatments that depend on the manipulation of *prāṇa*, such as acupuncture, are effective in treating all kinds of diseases.

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.1.9] the relationship of *prāṇa* with the atomic spirit soul is further explained:

*eṣo 'ṇur ātmā cetasā veditavyo  
yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā saṁviveśa  
prāṇaiś cittam sarvam otaṁ prajānām  
yasmin viśuddhe vibhavaty eṣa ātmā*

“The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of air (*prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *saṁāna* and *udāna*), is situated within the heart, and spreads its influence all over the body of the embodied living entities. When the soul is purified from the contamination of the five kinds of material air, its spiritual influence is exhibited.”

These five kinds of subtle life energies are collectively known as *prāṇa*. The *apāna-vāyu* goes downwards, *vyāna-vāyu* acts to shrink and expand, *saṁāna-vāyu* adjusts equilibrium, *udāna-vāyu* goes upwards—and when one is enlightened, one engages all these in searching for self-realization. The *haṭha-yoga* system is meant for controlling the five kinds of *prāṇa* encircling the pure soul by different kinds of sitting postures. The yogic process of breathing exercises called *prāṇāyāma* is aimed at controlling the *prāṇa*; not for any material profit, but for liberation of the atomic soul from the entanglement of the material atmosphere.

The passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* quoted above mentions *prāṇa* in the following *śloka*:

*katama sa devateti. prāṇa iti hovāca. sarvāṇi hā vai  
imāni bhūtāni prāṇam evābhisamviśanti prāṇam abhyujjīhate.*

They asked: “Who is this Deity of whom you speak?” He replied: “It is *prāṇa*. From *prāṇa* all the material elements have emanated, and into *prāṇa* they enter at the end.”

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Someone may object, “Does the word *prāṇa* here refer to the breath that travels in and out of the mouth, the subtle life energy, or does it refer to the Personality of Brahman? The ordinary meaning of the word *prāṇa* is the breath that travels in and out the mouth. That meaning is intended here.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this view by speaking the Vedic *siddhānta* [conclusion] in the following *sūtra*.



## Sūtra 1.1.23

*ata eva prāṇaḥ*

*ataḥ eva*—therefore; *prāṇaḥ*—the word *prāṇa*.

**The word *prāṇa* [in the Vedic literatures refers to the Supreme Brahman,] for the same reasons expressed in the previous *sūtra*.**

The word *prāṇa* in this passage from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* refers to the Personality of Brahman, and not to the transformations of air. Why? Because this text describes *prāṇa* as the original cause from which all creatures and material elements have emanated, and into which they enter at the end. These are the characteristics of the Supreme Brahman, and not the material element air or the various kinds of *prāṇa*.

## ***Adhikaraṇa 10: Jyotis refers to Brahman***

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The *jyotis* [light] mentioned in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.13.7 refers to Brahman. The entire passage is quoted below:

“The Lord called Gāyatrī is verily this all-full, in whatever form He manifests. Gayatri is speech, because the Lord as speech controls and commands all beings. He sings the Vedas and gives salvation to all, therefore He is called Gāyatrī.

“That same Lord who is in the sun and is called Gāyatrī, is also the Lord who is in the earth and is called Pṛthivī [the broad]. All beings are established in this form, and nothing excels this form.

“That same Lord who in the earth and is called Pṛthivī, is also the Lord who is in the soul and is called Śarīra [bodily form], the joy, bliss-wisdom. In this form rest all the senses, and nothing excels this form.

“That same Lord who in the soul and is called Śarīra, is also the Lord who is in the innermost part of the soul and is called the heart. In this form rest all the senses, and nothing excels this form.

“That sixfold Gāyatrī has four feet; this fact is declared by the *Rg-Veda* [10.90.3]:

“Such is His greatness, and He is even greater. All [embodied] souls constitute one quarter of Him, and His immortal three-quarters are in the spiritual worlds.”

“That Gāyatrī form of the Lord is indeed Brahman, the all-pervading Godhead. This indeed is the all-luminous [*ākāśa*] who is within the *jīva* and all-pervading.

“That all-luminous who is inside the *jīva* is verily the all-luminous who is in the heart of the *jīva*.

“That all-luminous who is in the heart is verily the Fullness, the Self-determined Lord. He who knows this obtains happiness, complete and independent.

“Of this Supreme Brahman called the heart, there are five divine gatekeepers. His eastern gatekeeper is the presiding deity of *prāṇa*, of the eye and of the sun. Let one meditate on him as the sun, as physical energy and health. He who meditates thus becomes energetic and healthy.

“Now His southern gatekeeper is the presiding deity of *vyāna*, of the ear, and is the moon. Let one meditate on him as the moon possessed of beauty and fame. He who meditates thus becomes artistic and famous.

“Now His northern gatekeeper is the presiding deity of *apāna*, of the organ of speech, and is Agni. Let one meditate on him as Agni, possessed of intellectual energy and sanity. He who meditates thus becomes intellectual and sane.

“Now His western gatekeeper is the presiding deity of *samāna*, and of wind, and he is Indra. Let one meditate on him as Indra, possessed of renown and lordliness. He who meditates thus becomes renowned and lordly.

“Now His central gatekeeper is the presiding deity of *udāna*, the chief Vāyu, Ākāśa. Let one meditate on him as the chief Vāyu, possessed of spiritual energy and greatness. He who meditates thus becomes spiritually energetic and great.

“These verily are the five servants of Brahman, the gatekeepers of pure wisdom and joy. He who knows these five servants of Brahman as the gatekeepers of the heart and the world of pure wisdom and joy, gets a virtuous son born in his family, and himself enters that world of pure wisdom and joy, because he knows these five servants of Brahman, the gatekeepers of the world of *svarga* [heaven].

“Now the light [*jyotis*] that shines above that heaven, in the worlds higher than the world of Brahmā, higher than all, beyond which there are no higher worlds, and are the highest worlds; that verily is the same light [*jyotis*] that is within the heart of men. And the direct proof is this:

“Namely, the warmth that one perceives through touch here in the body. Of Him is this praise, which one hears as existing in the ears, namely, the sound like the roar of the ocean, or that of thunder, or that of burning fire. Let one meditate on Brahman as thus seen and heard. He who knows this thus becomes clear-seeing and celebrated; yes, he who knows this thus.”

The Supreme Brahman is described in many places in the scriptures as being the source of all light.

*jyotiṣām api taj jyotis  
tamasah param ucyate  
jñānam jñeyam jñāna-gamyam  
hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam*

“He is the source of light in all luminous objects. He is beyond the darkness of matter and is unmanifested. He is knowledge, He is the object of knowledge, and He is the goal of knowledge. He is situated in everyone's heart.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.18]

*anādir ātmā puruṣo  
nirguṇaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ  
pratyag-dhāmā svayaṁ-jyotir  
viśvaṁ yena samanvitam*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Soul, and He has no beginning. He is transcendental to the material modes of nature and beyond the existence of this material world. He is perceivable everywhere because He is self-effulgent, and by His self-effulgent luster the entire creation is maintained.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.26.3]

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Modern science has determined that the primary measurable energy in the universe is light. Einstein's Theory of Relativity explains that the speed of light is a limit in this universe, and nothing can exceed that limit. Even time will bend to accommodate this limit, and this has been proven by numerous physical experiments. The quantum unit of light, the photon, is the fundamental particle of energy exchange in all subatomic, atomic and chemical reactions. Visible light is only a small part of the entire spectrum of electromagnetic radiation, all of which follows the same physical laws as apply to light. Thus light energy is the primary component of matter.

The *Vedas* and religious books of other ancient cultures talk about light as related to consciousness. Consciousness is what makes objects perceivable to us. Without consciousness, nothing is knowable and no action is possible. Therefore it is said that consciousness illuminates objects and makes them perceivable. In that sense, consciousness is like light. However, consciousness is intangible; it cannot be measured by any physical means. Only the secondary symptoms of consciousness, such as language, activity, and other external symptoms, can be observed. Consciousness itself remains ineluctably subjective.

Although the *Vedas* and similar sources indicate that a subjective process can demonstrate the existence of the soul and Brahman, insuperable difficulties stand in the way of verifying this information to the satisfaction of empirical scientific method. The strict standards of psychological experimental protocol demand that to eliminate bias, the operator of an experiment should not know what he is observing or measuring. This creates an insuperable difficulty for investigators, because any experiment based on the principles of consciousness given in the *Vedas* would have to be performed on the subjective platform; therefore we could never trust the objectivity of the experimental subjects' reports. Most contemporary people agree that it is better to simply ignore this arcane and recondite tradition in favor of clear, repeatable material scientific knowledge, which after all has given us such great economic and so many other advantages.

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: In the passage from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* quoted above, [3.13.7] states:

*atha yad atah paro divo jyotir dīpyate viśvataḥ prṣṭheṣu sarvataḥ prṣṭheṣv anuttameṣūttameṣu  
lokeṣu idam vāva tad yad idam asminn antaḥ puruṣe jyotiḥ*

“*Jyotis* shines in the spiritual world, above all the material planets. *Jyotis* forms the context in which all material universes and all material planets, from lowest to highest, rest. This *jyotis* is present in the heart of every living being.”

Someone may argue, “What is the *jyotis* [light] described here? Is it the light of the sun and other luminous objects, or is it the Supreme Brahman? Because there is no mention of Brahman in this passage, the word *jyotis* in this text must refer to the light of the sun and other luminous objects.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva replies by giving the *siddhānta* in the following *sūtra*.

## Sūtra 1.1.24

*jyotiś-caraṇābhidhānāt*

*jyotiḥ*—of the *jyotiḥ*; *caraṇa*—of the feet; *abhidhānāt*—because of the mention.

**Because the *jyotis* in this text is described as having feet, [it must refer to the Supreme Brahman].**

The word *jyotis* here should be understood to mean the Supreme Brahman. Why? Because this *jyotis* is described as having four feet. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [3.12.6] states:

*etāvan asya mahimato jyāyāms 'ca puruṣaḥ  
pado 'sya sarva-bhūtāni tri-pad asyāmṛtaṁ divi*

“The Personality of Brahman is full of glory and opulence. His one foot is all material elements and all living entities, and His other three feet are the eternal spiritual world.”

In the previously quoted text of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [3.13.7], and in this text where Brahman is described as having four feet, the spiritual world is mentioned. Although both texts are separated by a little distance, they are brought together by joint mention of the spiritual world, as well as by use of the relative and co-relative pronouns *yat* and *tat*. For these reasons it should be understood that both texts

describe the all-powerful Personality of Brahman. For these reasons the *jyotis* described in this text is the all-powerful Personality of Brahman, and not the light of the sun and other luminous objects.

### Sūtra 1.1.25

*chando- 'bhīdhānān neti cen na tathā ceto 'rpaṇa-nigādāt tathā hi darśanam*

*chanda*—of a meter; *abhidhānāt*—because of being the description; *na*—not; *tathā*—in that way; *ceta*—the mind; *arpaṇa*—placing; *nigādāt*—because of the instruction; *tathā hi*—furthermore; *darśanam*—logical.

**[If someone were to claim: “The word *jyotis* here does not refer to Brahman, but to the Gāyatrī meter,” [then I would reply:] This is not true. [The Gāyatrī meter] is taught to assist meditation on Brahman. [For this reason it is] logical and appropriate [to interpret the word *jyotis* to mean Brahman.]**

In Sanskrit, there are definite rules that regulate poetry; rhyme and meter are not written whimsically, as in much modern poetry. Amongst the regulated Sanskrit poetic meters, the Gāyatrī *mantra* chanted by qualified *brāhmaṇas* is the most prominent. The Gāyatrī *mantra* is mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; in fact, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* begins with a Gāyatrī *mantra*. The Gāyatrī *mantra* is very important in Vedic civilization and is considered to be the sound incarnation of Brahman. Brahmā is its initiator, and it is passed down from him in disciplic succession. To be successful in chanting the Gāyatrī *mantra*, one must first acquire the qualities of goodness according to the laws of material nature. Then one must be duly initiated into the disciplic succession from Brahmā by a bona fide spiritual master. This *mantra* is meant for spiritually advanced people, and when one attains success in chanting it, he attains the transcendental position. Because the Gāyatrī *mantra* is especially meant for God-realization, it represents the Supreme Lord.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not true that the Vedic literatures state:

*gāyatrī vā idaṁ sarvaṁ bhūtaṁ yad idaṁ kiñcit*

“Gāyatrī is everything that exists.”

*tam eva bhūta-vāk-prthivī-śarīra-hṛdaya-prabhedaiḥ*

“Gāyatrī is everything. Gāyatrī is speech, earth, body, and mind.”

*caiṣa catuṣ-padā ṣaḍ-vidhā gāyatrī tad etad ṛcābhyuktam*

“The Gāyatrī meter, of which there are four feet and six varieties, is extensively employed in the *mantras* of the *Vedas*.”

*etāvan asya mahimā*

“Gāyatrī is glorious.”

For these reasons it should be understood that the word *jyotis* in the Vedic literatures refers to the Gāyatrī *mantra*. Why, without any good reason, do you insist that the word *jyotis* refers to Brahman?”

To this objection I reply: Gāyatrī is a meter, and therefore it is not sensible to claim that it is everything, and everything has emanated from it. For this reason it is only reasonable to conclude that the word *jyotis* in this context refers to Brahman and not Gāyatrī. Why? Because in this *sūtra* Śrīla Vyāsadeva states: *tathā hi darśanam* [that the word *jyotis* refers to Brahman is only logical and consistent. Any other interpretation is illogical].

The esoteric truth is that the Supreme Brahman has incarnated in this world in the form of the Gāyatrī *mantra* to enable the living entities to meditate on Him. This fact is confirmed by the statements of Vedic literature.

*gāyatrī chandasām aham*

“Of poetry I am the Gāyatrī verse, sung daily by *brāhmaṇas*.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.35]

If we accept that Gāyatrī is an incarnation of Brahman, then the scriptural statement “Gāyatrī is everything” is perfectly sensible. Otherwise, the interpretation we concoct is illogical and forced. In this way we have demonstrated that the Gāyatrī *mantra* is an incarnation of Brahman.

## Sūtra 1.1.26

*bhūtādi-pada-vyapadeśopapatteś caivam*

*bhūta*—the living entities; *ādi*—beginning with; *pada*—feet; *vyapadeśa*—of the statement; *upapatteḥ*—for the reason; *ca*—also; *evam*—in this way.

**Because the Vedic literatures state that the living entities, [their speech, bodies, and minds are the four] feet [of Gāyatrī], it should be understood [that Gāyatrī is an incarnation of Brahman].**

Gāyatrī should be considered the same as Brahman. Why? Because Gāyatrī is described in the words:

*tam eva bhūta-vāk-prthivī-śarīra-hṛdaya-bhedaiḥ*

“Gāyatrī is everything. The four feet of Gāyatrī are speech, earth, body, and mind.”

Without Gāyatrī being an incarnation of Brahman, it is not possible for these four things to be Gāyatrī’s feet. For this reason, as previously explained, it is only natural to interpret the word Gāyatrī to mean Brahman. Furthermore, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [2.2.9-11] states:

*hiraṇmaye pare kośe virajaṁ brahma niṣkalam  
tac chubhraṁ jyotiṣāṁ jyotis tad yad ātma-vido viduḥ*

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra-tāraṁ  
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto ’yam agniḥ*

*tam eva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ  
tasya bhāsā sarvaṁ idaṁ vibhāti*

*brahmaivedam amṛtaṁ purastād brahma  
paścād brahma dakṣiṇataś cottareṇa*

*adhaś cordhvaṁ ca prasṛtaṁ brahmai-  
vedaṁ viśvaṁ idaṁ variṣṭham*

“In the spiritual realm, beyond the material covering, is the unlimited Brahman effulgence, which is free from material contamination. That effulgent white light is understood by transcendentalists to be the light of all lights. In that realm there is no need of sunshine, moonshine, fire or electricity for illumination. Indeed, whatever illumination appears in the material world is only a reflection of that supreme illumination. That Brahman is in front and in back, in the north, south, east and west, and also overhead and below. In other words, that supreme Brahman effulgence spreads throughout both the material and spiritual skies.”

Here the word *jyotis* is clearly mentioned to be identical with Brahman.

In the two quotations from Vedic literature that have formed the basis of our discussion, the word *dyu* [the spiritual world] has occurred. This appearance of the word *dyu* in both passages further confirms that the ambiguous words in these two passages refer to Brahman, and not to something else.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “The word *dyu* appearing in these two passages refers to different things.”

To answer this objection, Śrīla Vyāsadeva speaks the following *sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.1.27

*upadeśa-bhedān neti cen nobhayasminn apy avirodhāt*

*upadeśa*—of instruction; *bhedāt*—because of the difference; *na*—not; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *ubhayasmin*—in both places; *api*—also; *avirodhāt*—because of non-contradiction.

**[The objection that because the two scriptural passages employ the word *dyu* in two different cases [locative and ablative], therefore they describe two different objects, [which cannot both be Brahman,] is not a valid objection. [The use of the two different cases does not mean that] the two passages must describe two different things.**

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Two contradictory descriptions of Brahman are found in the scriptures. In one place the scriptures state:

*tri-padasyāmṛtaṁ divi*

“The eternal Personality of Brahman resides in the spiritual world, which constitutes three-quarters of all existence.”

In another place the scriptures state:

*paro divaḥ*

“The Personality of Brahman resides on top of the spiritual world.”

In the first quotation the spiritual world was placed in the locative case. Since this is so, both passages contradict each other, They describe two different objects, one within the spiritual world, and the other above it.”

To this objection I reply: Why do you say this? Both passages refer to the same object. The use of the locative and ablative cases in these quotations does not present a contradiction. For example, in the material world a parrot may be said to be in a tree or on it. There is no real difference in the two statements. In the same way the Personality of Brahman may be said to be in the spiritual world or on it. There is no real difference.

### **Adhikaraṇa 11: Prāṇa refers to Brahman**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa, Chapter 3, the following passage appears:

Pratardana, the son of Divodāsa, was able to enter the favorite residence of Mahārāja Indra by virtue of his chivalry and heroism. Indra said to him, “Pratardana, choose any benediction you like.” Pratardana answered, “Please choose the benediction for me that you think is most beneficial for a man.” Indra said to him, “No one who chooses, chooses for another; choose for yourself.” Pratardana replied, “I do not want any boon that I would choose myself.”

Then Indra did not swerve from truth, for Indra is truth itself. He said to Pratardana, “Then know me only; that is what I deem most beneficial for man, that he should know me. I slew the

three-headed son of Tvaṣṭri; I delivered the Arunmukhas, the devotees, to the wolves [śālāvṛkas]; breaking many treaties, I killed the people of Prahāda in heaven, the people of Pulomā in the sky, the people of Kalakanga on earth. And not one hair of myself was harmed thereby; and he who knows me thus, by no deed of his is his life harmed, not by the murder of his mother, not by the murder of his father, not by theft, nor by the killing of a *brāhmaṇa*. If he is going to commit a sin, the bloom does not depart from his face.”

Indra said, “I am *prāṇa*. An intelligent person will meditate on me as the conscious self, as life, as immortality. life is *prāṇa*; *prāṇa* is life. As long as *prāṇa* dwells in this body, surely there is life. By *prāṇa* he obtains immortality in the next world, by knowledge he obtains the true conception of spiritual life. He who meditates on me as life and immortality gains full life in this world, and immortality and indestructibility in the next world.”

Pratardana said, “Some philosophers maintain that the *prāṇas* become one, for otherwise no one could make known a name by speech, see a form by the eye, hear a sound with the ear and think a thought with the mind at the same time. After becoming one, the *prāṇas* perceive all these together, one by one. While speech speaks, all the *prāṇas* speak after it; while the eye sees, all the *prāṇas* see after it; while the ear hears, all the *prāṇas* hear after it; while the mind thinks, all the *prāṇas* think after it. While the *prāṇa* breathes, all the *prāṇas* breathe after it.”

“Thus it is indeed,” replied Indra, “nevertheless there is a pre-eminence among the *prāṇas*. Man lives deprived of speech, therefore we see dumb people. Man lives deprived of sight, for we see blind people. Man lives deprived of hearing, for we see deaf people. Man lives deprived of mind, for we see infants. Man lives deprived of his arms, deprived of his legs, for we see thus. But *prāṇa* alone is the conscious self, and having laid hold of this body, *prāṇa* makes it rise up. Therefore it is said, ‘Let man worship *prāṇa* alone with *uktha* [*mantras* of the *karma-kāṇḍa* fire sacrifices]’. What is *prāṇa*, that is *prajñā* [self-consciousness]; what is *prajñā*, that is *prāṇa*, for they live in this body and go out of it together. This is the evidence or understanding of that: When a man is in dreamless sleep, he becomes one with that *prāṇa* alone. Then when he is absorbed in *prāṇa*, speech goes to him with all names, the eye with all forms, the ear with all sounds, the mind with all thoughts. And when he awakes, then just as burning sparks proceed from a fire in all directions, then from that self, the *prāṇas* of speech, etc. proceed to their places; similarly the demigods like Agni, etc. proceed from the *prāṇas*, and from the demigods proceeds the world.

“This is the evidence or understanding of that: When a man is sick, going to die, falling into weakness and faint, they say, ‘His thought has departed, he hears not, he sees not, he speaks not, he thinks not.’ Then he goes with *prāṇa* alone. Then speech goes to him with all names, the eye with all forms, the ear with all sounds, the mind with all thoughts. Then when he departs from that body, he departs together with all these.

Speech gives up all names to him who is absorbed in *prāṇa*, so that by speech he obtains all names. The nose gives him all odors, so that by smell he obtains all odors. The eye gives up to him all forms, so that by the eye he obtains all forms. The ear gives up to him all sounds, so that by the ear he obtains all sounds. The mind gives up to him all thoughts, so that by the mind he obtains all thoughts. This is complete absorption in *prāṇa*. And what is *prāṇa*, that is *prajñā* [self-consciousness]; what is *prajñā*, that is *prāṇa*. For together they live in this body, and together they depart.

Now we shall explain how all things become one in that *prajñā*. Speech is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, the word is its object, placed outside. The nose is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, odor is its object, placed outside. The eye is one portion taken out of that *prajñā*, form

is its object, placed outside. The ear is one portion taken out of that *prajña*, sound is its object, placed outside. The tongue is one portion taken out of that *prajña*, the taste of food is its object, placed outside. The two hands are one portion taken out of that *prajña*, its pleasure and pain are its object, placed outside. The sex organ is one portion taken out of that *prajña*, the happiness, joy and offspring are its object, placed outside. The two feet are one portion taken out of that *prajña*, movement are its object, placed outside. The mind is one portion taken out of that *prajña*, thoughts and desires are its object, placed outside.

Having by *prajña* taken possession of speech, by speech he obtains all words. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the nose, by the nose he obtains all odors. Having by *prajña* taken possession of eye, by the eye he obtains all forms. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the ear, by the ear he obtains all sounds. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the tongue, by the tongue he obtains all tastes of food. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the two hands, by the two hands he obtains all actions. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the body, by the body he obtains all pleasures and pains. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the sex organ, by the sex organ he obtains all happiness, joy and offspring. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the two feet, by the two feet he obtains all movements. Having by *prajña* taken possession of the mind, by the mind he obtains all thoughts and desires.

For without *prajña* [self-consciousness], speech does not make known to the self any words. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that word.' Without *prajña* the nose does not make known any odor. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that odor.' Without *prajña* the eye does not make known any form. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that form.' Without *prajña* the ear does not make known any sound. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that sound.' Without *prajña* the tongue does not make known any taste. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that taste.' Without *prajña* the two hands do not make known any action. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that act.' Without *prajña* the body does not make known any pleasure or pain. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that pleasure or pain.' Without *prajña* the sex organ does not make known any happiness, joy or offspring. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that happiness, joy or offspring.' Without *prajña* the two feet do not make known any movement. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not apprehend that movement.' Without *prajña* no thought succeeds, nothing can be known that is to be known.

Let no man try to find what speech is; let him know the speaker. Let no man try to find what odor is; let him know him who smells. Let no man try to find what form is; let him know the seer. Let no man try to find what sound is; let him know the hearer. Let no man try to find what the tastes of food are; let him know the knower of tastes. Let no man try to find what action is; let him know the agent. Let no man try to find what pleasure and pain are; let him know the knower of what pleasure and pain are. Let no man try to find what happiness, joy and offspring are; let him know the knower of happiness, joy and offspring. Let no man try to find what movement is; let him know the mover. Let no man try to find what mind is; let him know the thinker.

These ten objects [what is spoken, smelled, seen, heard, tasted, done, felt, enjoyed, moved and thought] have reference to the *prajña* [self-consciousness]. These ten subjects [speech, odor, form, sound, taste, action, pleasure and pain; happiness, joy and offspring; movement and thoughts] have reference to objects. If there were no objects, there would be no subjects; if there were no subjects, there would be no objects, for nothing could be achieved by one without the other. But it should be known that the self-consciousness [*prajña*], *prāṇa*, life, is not many, but one. For as in a chariot, the circumference of a wheel is placed on the spokes, and spokes on the



nave; thus are these objects placed on the subjects, and the subjects on the *prāṇa*. And that *prāṇa* is indeed the Self of the *prajña*, the self-conscious self; blessed, imperishable, immortal. He does not increase by a good action; He does not decrease by a bad action. For He makes him whom He wishes to elevate from these worlds do good actions, and He makes him whom He wishes to denigrate do bad actions. He is the guardian of the world; He is the king of the world; He is the Lord of the universe. And He is my [Indra's] Self, thus let it be known, yea, thus let it be known!

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]:

The great Vedic king named Pratardana, also known as Dyumān, lived in very ancient times. He was the son of Divodāsa and the great-great-grandson of Dhanvantari, the powerful incarnation of Godhead who gave the medical science to humankind. The passage from the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* quoted above narrates how, when Indra granted Pratardana a benediction, Pratardana requested Indra choose the benediction he was to give. Indra instructed Pratardana in the following words:

*prāṇo 'smi prajñātmā taṁ mām āyur-amṛtam upasasva*

“I am *prāṇa*. An intelligent person will worship me as the great immortal person.”

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Our opponent may object, “Who is this person named *prāṇa*? Is he an individual conscious living entity, or is He the Personality of Brahman who resides in everyone's heart as the Superconscious living entity? The words *indra* and *prāṇa* here refer to a specific individual conscious living entity. When Pratardana inquired, Indra replied by saying the worship of Indra was the most beneficial activity for the living entities.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: Śrīla Vyāsadeva responds to this argument in the following *sūtra*.

## Sūtra 1.1.28

*prāṇas tathānugamāt*

*prāṇaḥ*—the word *prāṇa*; *tathā*—in the same way; *anugamāt*—because of the context.

**The word *prāṇa* [should be understood to refer to Brahman] because of the context of its use.**

The *prāṇa* here must refer to the Personality of Brahman, who is present in everyone's heart as the Superconscious living entity. *Prāṇa* here cannot refer to the individual conscious living entity. Why? Śrīla Vyāsadeva explains: *tathānugamāt* [because of the context]. The *prāṇa* described here is intelligence, the Self, and transcendental bliss. He is free from old age and death. These attributes clearly indicate that the word *prāṇa* here refers to the Personality of Brahman.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “To interpret the word *prāṇa* here to mean Brahman is very inappropriate. Mahārāja Indra is speaking, and he says *prāṇo 'smi*: “I am *prāṇa*.” The speaker is Mahārāja Indra, and he clearly refers to himself. He then proceeds to further identify himself, saying *tri-śiṣṇāṁ tvaṣṭram ahanam aruṇmukhān ṛṣīn śalavṛkebhyaḥ prayacchan*: “I killed Vṛtrāsura, the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭā, and I gave the Aruṇmukha sages to the Śalavṛkas.” These are all historical incidents, deeds performed by Indra. All this shows that the Indra described here is an individual conscious living entity who advises the living entities to worship him. Even though at the end of this passage *prāṇa* is described as *ānanda* [transcendental bliss], this also is consistent, because the transcendental glories of the individual conscious living entities are also described in the Vedic literatures. In fact, when Indra says he is *prāṇa* and everyone should worship him, he refers to himself, the individual conscious living entity Indra. Indra's statement may be compared to the advice of the

Vedic literature *vācam dhenum upāsīta*: “One should worship the goddess of speech just as one worships the cow.” Because Mahārāja Indra is the strongest of living entities, and because strength is identified with the living force [*prāṇa*], he identifies himself with that *prāṇa*. This is perfectly in accord with the statement of Vedic literature *prāṇo vai balam*: “The living force is strength.” In this way it should be understood that the words *prāṇa* and *indra* here refer to a specific individual conscious living entity.”

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument in the next *sūtra*.

## Sūtra 1.1.29

*na vaktur ātmopadeśād iti ced adhyātma-sambandha-bhūma hy asmin*

*na*—not; *vaktuḥ*—of the speaker; *ātma*—of the self; *upadeśāt*—because of the instruction; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *adhyātma*—to the Personality of Brahman; *sambandha*—references; *bhūma*—abundance; *hi*—indeed; *asmin*—in this *Upaniṣad*.

**If it is said that the speaker here refers to himself, I say that is not true. In this passage there are many references to the Personality of Brahman.**

In this *sūtra* the word *adhyātma-sambandha* means “with reference to the Personality of Brahman”, and the word *bhūma* means “abundance”. In this chapter of *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* the word *prāṇa* repeatedly appears in various contexts where it must unavoidably be interpreted to mean “the Personality of Brahman.”

For example:

1. When Pratardana asked for the most beneficial gift, or in other words liberation, Indra replied by saying “Worship me as *prāṇa*.” In this context *prāṇa* must mean the Personality of Brahman, for only He can grant liberation.

2. The *Upaniṣad* explains:

*eṣa eva sādhu karma kārayati*

“*Prāṇa* bestows upon the living entity the power to act wonderfully.”

This must refer to the Personality of Brahman, the supreme controller, and not to the tiny demigod Indra.

3. The *Upaniṣad* also explains:

*tad yathā rathasyāreṣu nemir arpitā nābhavara arpita evam evaita bhūta-mātraḥ.  
prajñā-mātrāsv arpitaḥ. prajñā-mātrāḥ prāṇe ‘rpitaḥ.*

“Just as in a chariot wheel the rim rests on the spokes, and the spokes on the hub, in the same way the material elements rest on *prajñā* [intelligence], and *prajñā* rests on *prāṇa*.”

This quote states that everything sentient and insentient is maintained by *prāṇa*.

4. The *Upaniṣad* also explains:

*sa eṣa prāṇa eva prajñātmānando ‘jaro ‘mṛtaḥ. eṣa lokādhipatir eṣa sarveśvaraḥ*

“*Prāṇa* is the Superconscious living entity present in all living entities. *Prāṇa* is the transcendental bliss. *Prāṇa* remains eternally untouched by old-age and death. *Prāṇa* is the master of all living entities and all planets. *Prāṇa* is the Supreme Controller.”

Because *prāṇa* is transcendental bliss and has the various qualities described here, the word *prāṇa* in this context can refer only to the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Brahman, the Supreme Controller who is present in the hearts of all living entities as the Superconscious living entity. The word *prāṇa* here cannot possibly refer to anyone else.

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not so that Indra directly describes himself as *prāṇa*? Why does he do this if your interpretation that *prāṇa* means “Supreme Brahman” is correct?”

Śrīla Vyāsadeva answers this objection in the following *sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.1.30

*śāstra-dr̥ṣṭyā tūpadeśo vāmādevavat*

*śāstra*—of scripture; *dr̥ṣṭyā*—from the viewpoint; *tu*—but; *upadeśaḥ*—instruction; *vāmādeva*—Vāmādeva; *vat*—like.

**[Indra speaks in this way, identifying himself with Brahman] in accordance with the teaching of Vedic literature. He does this just as the sage Vāmādeva also did.**

The word *tu* [but] is used here to remove doubt. Even though Indra was perfectly aware that he was an individual conscious living entity and not the Supreme Brahman, he still said, “Worship me, knowing me to be Brahman,” and this statement is actually perfectly correct according to the philosophy of Vedic literature. It is not untrue. For example, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* states:

*na vai vāco na cakṣūmsi na śrotrāṇi na manāmsīty ācakṣate prāṇa ity evācakṣate prāṇo hy evaitāni sarvāṇi bhavanti*

“The senses are not properly called ‘voices’, ‘eyes’, ‘ears’, and ‘minds’. The proper name for them all is *prāṇa*. Everything that exists is *prāṇa*.”

Because *prāṇa* maintains their activities, the senses are identified as *prāṇa*. The learned, self-realized speaker, Indra, wishing to teach his humble, well-behaved student, instructed him: “I am that *prāṇa*.” This means that Indra is dependent on *prāṇa* or Brahman, not that he is identical with Brahman in all respects.

The example of Vāmādeva is found in the following passage of *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [1.4.10]:

*tad vaitat paśyan nṛṣir vāmādevaḥ pratipade ahaṁ manur abhavaṁ sūryaś ca*

“Seeing this, the sage Vāmādeva repeated at every moment: ‘I was Manu. I was the sun-god.’”

Here Vāmādeva identifies himself with Manu and the sun-god because the Supreme Brahman is the controller who grants powers to Vāmādeva, Manu, and the sun-god. Because they all obtain their powers from the Supreme Brahman, in one sense they are all one. The Supreme Brahman is all-pervading. He is, in one sense, one with everything that is pervaded by Him. This confirmed by the following statements of *smṛti-śāstra*:

*yo ‘yaṁ tavāgato deva-samīpaṁ devatā-gaṇaḥ sa tvam eva jagat-sraṣṭā yataḥ sarva-gato bhavān*

“Whoever comes before You, be he a demigod, is created by You, O Personality of Brahman.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.9.69]

*sarvaṁ samāpnoṣi tato ‘si sarvaṁ*

“You are all-pervading, and thus You are everything.” [Bhagavad-gītā 11.40]

In ordinary usage also, when there is a great assembly in a certain place, people call that oneness because there is unity of place, and also when there is agreement of opinion that is also called oneness. For example, it is said: “In the evening the scattered cows assemble in one place and thus attain oneness,” and “The disputing monarchs finally agreed and became one in their opinion.”

At this point someone may raise the following objection: “Is it not so that although there are many passages indicating that the word *prāṇa* in this passage refers to Brahman, still there are many other passages that demonstrate that it is not possible for the word *prāṇa* to refer Brahman? Some examples are:

*na vācam vijijñāsītā vaktāram vidyāt*

“Do not try to understand the meaning of a statement without first understanding who has spoken it.” [*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 3.8]

*tri-śiṣṭānam tvaṣṭram ahanam*

“I am the Indra who killed Vṛtrāsura, the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭā.”

These two quotations clearly identify that the speaker of the passage in question was the demigod Indra, who is an individual conscious living entity. That the word *prāṇa* refers to the life-force, or breath within the body, is confirmed by the following scriptural statements:

*yāvad asmin śarīre prāṇo vasati tāvad āyur atha khalu prāṇa eva prajñātma idaṁ śarīram parigrhyotthāpayati*

“As long as *prāṇa* remains within it, the body is alive. *Prāṇa* is the conscious living entity. *Prāṇa* grasps this material body, and makes it rise up and move about.” [*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 2.2-3]

*yo vai prāṇaḥ sa prajñā yā prajñā sa prāṇaḥ. sa hā hy etāv asmin śarīre vasataḥ. sahotkramate.*

“*Prāṇa* is the same as *prajñā* [consciousness]. *Prajñā* is the same as *prāṇa*. Together they reside in the material body. At the last moment they both leave the body together.” [*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*]

These quotations clearly show that it is not impossible to interpret the word *prāṇa* in this context to mean “the individual conscious living entity” or “living force”. The scriptures teach us that both are actually identical, the living force being the active expression of the inactive conscious living entity. In this way it is valid to interpret the word *prāṇa* in three ways: 1. the individual conscious living entity; 2. the living force; and 3. the Supreme Brahman. The word *prāṇa* here refers to all three. All three are worshipable for the living entities.”

Śrīla Vyāsadeva refutes this argument in the following *sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.1.31

*jīva-mukhya-prāṇa-liṅgān neti cen nopāśya-traividhyād āśritatvād iha tad-yogāt*

*jīva*—of the individual conscious living entity; *mukhya*—the primary; *prāṇa*—living force; *liṅgāt*—the signs; *na*—not; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *upāśya*—worshipable; *taividhyāt*—because of being there; *āśritatvāt*—because of taking shelter; *iha*—here; *tad-yogāt*—because of appropriateness.

**If someone says the word *prāṇa* also refers to the individual conscious living entity and the primary living force in addition to referring to Brahman, then I reply that such an interpretation is not correct. If the word *prāṇa* referred to all three, then all three would**

**be worshipable. This view is not correct, because neither logic nor the authority of scripture support it.**

Someone may say that the natural features of the individual conscious living entity and the living force are such that they are proper objects of worship. To this I reply: This is not true. Why? For then there would be three objects of worship. When Indra says, “Worship me as *prāṇa*,” he uses only one sentence. The rules of rhetoric demand that a sentence have only one correct interpretation, and therefore if we say that the word *prāṇa* here refers to three different objects, we shall break that rule. This is the true meaning: There are three possible ways to interpret the meaning of *prāṇa* in this context:

1. Take all these passages, including what directly mentions Brahman, as referring to the individual conscious living entity and living force;
2. Take these passages as referring some to the individual conscious living entity and living force, and some to Brahman; and
3. Take these passages as all referring to Brahman. The first possibility has already been clearly refuted, The second possibility is not very acceptable, for it recommends that there are three distinct objects of worship.

Śrīla Vyāsadeva says the third possibility is actually logical because *āśritatvāt* [this view is supported by the statements of Vedic literature]. We may see that many passages in Vedic literature that seem to refer to the individual conscious living entity or the living force, in fact refer to Brahman. For example, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.1.15] it is said,

*na vai vāco na cakṣūṁṣi na śrotrāṇi na manāṁsīty ācakṣate prāṇa iti evācakṣate prāṇo hy evaitāni sarvāṇi bhavanti*

“In the body of a living being neither the power to speak, nor the power to see, nor the power to hear, nor the power to think is the prime factor; it is life which is the center of all activities.”

If at this point someone were to object: “Is it not true that in this passage the natural sense of the words supports the interpretations of the individual conscious living entity and the living force?” I would reply by saying: In this passage the worship of *prāṇa* is described as the most beneficial activity for the living entities. For this reason the interpretation of the Supreme Brahman is logical. For this reason Śrīla Vyāsadeva states in the *sūtra*, *tad-yogāt* [because this is logical].

Someone may then object: “Is it not true that the scriptures explain that the *prāṇa* and *prajñā* both reside within the body of the individual conscious living entity, and also leave that body together at the time of death? How is this possible if you say that *prāṇa* means Brahman?”

To this objection I reply: Brahman is present in the body of the individual conscious living entity in two ways: as *kriyā-śakti* [the potency of action], which is also known as *prāṇa*, and as *jñāna-śakti* [the potency of knowledge], which is also known as *prajñā*. Both are manifested from Brahman. These two potencies remain within the body of the individual conscious living entity, and also leave it together at the time of death.

Another objection may be raised in the following words: “Is it not true that *prāṇa* and the other words you claim are names of the Supreme Brahman are all actually adjectives, and therefore cannot function as names?”

To this objection I reply: This not true. These words are simultaneously adjectives and nouns. When Indra says *prāṇo ‘smi prajñātmā* [I am *prāṇa*, *prajñā*, and *ātmā*], he uses these words as nouns. For these reasons *prāṇa*, *prajñā*, and other words used by Indra should be understood to refer to Brahman.

At this point a further objection may be raised: “Is it not true that in the beginning you adequately demonstrated that the word *prāṇa* refers to Brahman? Most of your arguments are redundant.”

To this objection I reply: This is not true. In the beginning I dispelled the doubts that may have arisen in regard to the single word *prāṇa* taken by itself. After that I discussed the word *prāṇa* in relation to a specific quotation, where it was related with other words, such as *ānanda*, and in this discussion I demonstrated that the word *prāṇa* was used there in such a way that it could only be understood to mean Brahman, and not the individual conscious living entity, or anything else. For this reason I have discussed this specific passage of *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* separately.

*Thus ends the First Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!*

# Śrī Vedānta-sūtra

## Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman

### Pāda 2: Certain other words, though less clearly related to Brahman, also describe Him.

*manomayādibhiḥ śabdaiḥ  
svarūpaṁ yasya kīrtiyate  
hṛdaye sphuratu śrīmān  
mamāsau śyāmasundaraḥ*

“It is said that the Lord appears to one who calls out to Him with a pure mind and heart. May He appear within the core of my heart in His beautiful original form as Śyāmasundara.”

The First Pāda of this Adhyāya teaches that one should inquire about the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the creator of all universes. It has also been shown that certain words used in the Vedic literature, such as *ānandamaya*, *jyotis*, *prāṇa*, *ākāśa*, etc. although they normally refer to other things, in the Vedic context clearly refer to that Supreme Brahman because of the *samanvaya* or grammatical construction of the passages in which they appear. The Second and Third Pādas will demonstrate that certain other words, although less clearly related to Brahman, also describe Him.

### Adhikaraṇa 1: The Word "Manomaya" Refers to Brahman

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the chapter of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* describing *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā* [3.14.1-4] we read:

“This Brahman is indeed all-pervading. Let one meditate with devotion on Him as the Mover on the Water. Such meditation leads to faith. Because a man is a creature of faith, as his faith is in this life, so will be his condition after death. So let him generate full faith in the Lord.

“The Lord is omnipotent, known by those whose minds are pure [*manomaya*], glorious, resolute, all-wise, the doer, the ordainer, the heart’s desire, the most sweet-scented, the support of the creation, and the silent impartial witness in everyone’s heart.

“This Self within my heart is smaller than a grain of rice, smaller than a grain of barley, smaller than a mustard seed or the kernel of a mustard seed. This Self within my heart is also greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than the entire universe.

“He is the enjoyer of all activities, all desires, all sweet fragrances, and all tastes. He embraces the entire creation, and is the silent impartial witness. This Self within my heart is that Brahman. Let one meditate on Him with this idea: When departing from this body I shall reach Him. He who has this faith certainly obtains Him. Thus said Śāṇḍilya, thus said Śāṇḍilya.”

In conditioned material consciousness, the soul is under the illusory impression that he can become the lord of the universe, and this misconception is dragged to the ultimate point of ludicrousness when he imagines himself to be the Supreme. The Māyāvādī theory is that the spiritual form of the Lord is a product of illusion, and Brahman is actually formless. Somehow or other (they are vague on this point) the Supreme becomes fragmented into many and becomes covered by illusion. They assert that when

one gets free from illusion and attains self-realization, one will realize that he is actually God, and that self-realization means losing one's individual identity and merging into the existence of the Supreme.

The foolish conditioned soul overwhelmed by ignorance does not consider that by definition, the Supreme cannot be fragmented nor covered by illusion. If the Supreme can become conditioned by illusion, where is His supremacy? In that case *māyā*, or illusion, would be supreme. So the impersonalist speculators actually worship illusion as the supreme.

But it is a matter of everyday experience that illusion is always subordinate to reality. For example, the shadow of a pot exists because of the existence of the pot, a solid object. Words and other symbols exist because of the existence of the real objects they represent. Similarly, the temporary material world full of individual living entities exists because of the existence of the eternal spiritual world and the independent, all-powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme is eternally Supreme; if the living entities were actually supreme, then they would be supreme already, and no process of self-realization would be necessary. Therefore the living entities can never become supreme because they are constitutionally subordinate, conditioned and dependent.

The Vedic scriptures explain this truth on every page. Nevertheless, because of their desires for sense gratification, the conditioned living entities try to explain the scriptures in a way that justifies the misconception that they are the owners, controllers and enjoyers of the cosmic manifestation. Since the direct meaning of the scriptures flatly contradicts that theory, they must resort to imaginative speculation and false logic. The Māyāvādīs may try to masquerade their deliberate obfuscation and misinterpretation of the scriptures as a noble search for truth, but the actual scientific understanding is that the intelligence of the conditioned souls is impure and covered by illusion due to contact with the material energy of the three modes of nature.

Therefore if they are to be rescued from illusion, it is necessary that they purify themselves under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, who not only is a *brāhmaṇa* or knower of Brahman by qualification, but must also be a Vaiṣṇava or knower of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by perfect self-realization. The only purifying process recognized in the *Vedas* is to worship the Supreme Lord under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession from Him. That is the actual Vedic spiritual path; the imaginary *sādhana* of the impersonalists is not found in the *Vedas*. *Bhagavad-gītā* [7.19] confirms this truth as follows:

*bahūnāṁ janmanāṁ ante  
jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti  
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*

“After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *Śāṇḍilya-vidyā* [3.14.1] the following explanation is given:

*sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma taj jalān iti śānta upāsīta. atha khalu kratumayaḥ puruṣaḥ. yathā kratur asmin loke puruṣo bhavati tathetaḥ pretya bhavati. sa kratuṁ kurvīta. manomayaḥ prāṇa-śarīro bhā-rūpaḥ satya-saṅkalpa ākāśātmā sarva-karmā sarva-kāmāḥ sarva-gandhaḥ sarva-rasaḥ sarvaṁ idaṁ abhyāto avākyān ādaraḥ.*

“Everything is Brahman. From Him everything has come. The peaceful sage should worship Brahman with this idea. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the activities of devotional service. Whenever devotional service is performed in this world, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is present. According to [the degree of] one's performance of devotional service in



this life, he will attain an appropriate body after death. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is known by those whose minds are pure [*manomaya*]. He is the controller of all life. He is effulgent and glorious. His every desire is automatically fulfilled. He is all-pervading. He is the original creator of everything. He fulfills all desires. He possesses all pleasant fragrances. He is all sweetness. He is present everywhere. He cannot be described in words. He cannot be known.”

Here the word *manomaya* appears in a different context than in the First Pāda, [Adhikarana 6](#). Whereas there it indicates the mental platform, a developmental stage of consciousness prior to full self-realization, here it means the state of pure mind or perfect spiritual consciousness. The overall significance is that to attain self-realization or direct consciousness of the Personality of Brahman, one must have a perfectly pure mind. The passage goes on to describe some of the wonderful qualities of Brahman, such as His being the controller, His effulgence, glory, all-pervasive presence and so on.

*Samśaya* [doubt]: Do the adjectives in this passage, beginning with *manomaya*, describe the *jīva* or the Paramātmā?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [the opponent speaks]: “The words *manah* [mind] and *prāṇa* [life-breath] here appropriately describe the *jīva*. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [2.1.2] explains, *aprāṇo hy amanāḥ śubhrah*: ‘The splendid Supreme Person has neither breath nor mind.’ Because this passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* contradicts this description of the Supreme Lord, it should be understood to refer to the *jīva*. The opening words *sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*, ‘Everything is Brahman,’ do not necessarily mean that the entire passage following them is about Brahman, but are merely spoken so that the worshiper may become peaceful. The teaching there is that because Brahman is everything, one should become peaceful, as this is a prerequisite for meditation. The rest of the passage should then be understood to refer to the *jīva*, and the word *brahma* at the end of the passage should also be understood to refer to the *jīva*.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: This passage from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is a perfect example of how the impersonalists take Vedic statements indicating the Supreme Brahman out of context and try to apply them to the individual *jīva*. This passage mentions *kratu* [sacrifice in devotional service], but it is not logical or even possible that the *jīva* can offer sacrifice to himself. Yet the impersonalist tries to twist the meaning of the scripture to match his own preconceptions. The proper conclusion is:

## Sūtra 1.2.1

*sarvatra prasiddhopadeśāt*

*sarvatra*—everywhere; *prasiddha*—celebrated; *upadeśāt*—because of the teaching.

**[The word *manomaya* and others here refer to the Paramātmā] because [in this passage] the famous [attributes of the Paramātmā taught] everywhere [in *Vedānta* literature] are described [in the phrase beginning *taj-jalān*].**

This passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* describes the Paramātmā and not the *jīva*. Why? Because the qualities that belong only to the Paramātmā, beginning with His being the creator of the material universes, and which are described everywhere [*saravatra*] in *Vedānta* literature, are mentioned in this passage in the phrase beginning *taj-jalān*, and other phrases and words. Although the *upakrama* or opening words of this passage [*sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma*] are not intended to teach about Brahman but to invoke peacefulness, beginning with the word *manomaya* it definitely describes the Supreme Brahman. Here *manomaya* means ‘He who can be understood by a pure mind.’ The *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.19] explains:

*manasaivānudraṣṭavyam*

“He may be seen by a pure mind.”

*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.20-23 explains:

*yatroparamate cittam niruddham yoga-sevayā  
yatra caivātmanātmānam paśyann ātmani tuṣyati*

*sukham ātyantikam yat tad buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam  
vetti yatra na caivāyam sthitaś calati tattvataḥ*

*yam labdhvā cāparam lābham manyate nādhikam tataḥ  
yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate*

*taṁ vidyād duḥkha-saṁyoga-viyogam yoga-samjñitam*

“The stage of perfection is called trance, or *samādhi*, when one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of *yoga*. This is characterized by one's ability to see the *ātmā* [Supreme Self] by the pure mind, and to relish and rejoice in the Self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness and enjoys himself through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.”

The word *kratu* means the process of sacrifice or devotional service. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*om namo bhagavate mantra-tattva-liṅgāya yajña-kratave mahā-dhvarāvayavāya mahā-puruṣāya namaḥ*

“O Lord, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You as the gigantic person. Simply by chanting *mantras*, we shall be able to understand You fully. You are *yajña* [sacrifice], and You are the *kratu* [ritual]. Therefore all the ritualistic ceremonies of sacrifice are part of Your transcendental body, and You are the only enjoyer of all sacrifices.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.35]

*viṣṇuḥ sthitau kratu-patir dvija-dharma-setuḥ*

The Lord manifested His form as Viṣṇu, the Lord of sacrifice and protector of the twice-born *brāhmaṇas* and their religious duties, to maintain the universe. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.4.5]

Another significant idea presented here is that the Lord is present in acts of sacrifice and devotional service. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.15:

*karma brahmodbhavam viddhi  
brahmākṣara-samudbhavam  
tasmāt sarva-gataṁ brahma  
nityam yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*

“Regulated activities are prescribed in the *Vedas*, and the *Vedas* are directly manifested from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently the all-pervading Transcendence is eternally situated in acts of sacrifice.”

When we perform sacrifice for the satisfaction of the *yajña-puruṣa*, Viṣṇu, then we are directly in the presence of the Lord. We must find out the instructions for this kind of work in Brahman, or the transcendental *Vedas*. The *Vedas* provide the regulations or codes of directions for practical work in

devotional service. Any work done according to these directions has the extraordinary quality of not creating karmic reactions, because it is done to further the Supreme purpose of the Lord. Even ordinary religious rituals, charity and other work done in the mode of goodness creates *karma*, such as attaining the heavenly planets, that binds one to material existence. On the other hand, work performed in defiance of the Vedic instructions is called *vikarma* [unauthorized or sinful work] which leads to degradation. Therefore, one who takes direction from the *Vedas* is saved from the good and bad reaction of work, and is situated in the liberated stage of spiritual life, for the directions in the *Vedas* are directly manifested from the breathing of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is said:

*asya mahato bhūtasya naśvasitam etad yad ṛg-vedo yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharvāṇ girasaḥ.*

“The four *Vedas*—namely the *Ṛg-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, *Sāma-veda* and *Atharva-veda*—are all emanations from the breathing of the great Personality of Godhead.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.11]

All this can be known by those whose minds are pure, or in other words, who have no desire to benefit materially from the results of their work. They are free from desire, material work and its reactions because their only desire is to satisfy the Supreme Brahman by all their activities. Nevertheless, the Lord does not depend on the service of His devotees to be satisfied. He is always fully satisfied, because He is *satya-saṅkalpa*: all His desires are automatically fulfilled by His inconceivable potencies.

“He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity. There is no difference between His body and His soul. He is absolute. All His senses are transcendental. Any one of His senses can perform the action of any other sense. Therefore, no one is greater than Him or equal to Him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus His deeds are automatically performed as a natural sequence.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.7-8]

*nityam ca pūrṇa-kāmasya*

“My desires are always automatically fulfilled.” [*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* 14.32]

*kim asmābhir vanaukobhir*

*anyābhir vā mahātmanah*

*śrī-pater āpta-kāmasya*

*kriyetārthah kṛtātmanah*

“The great soul Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the Goddess of Fortune, and He automatically achieves whatever He desires. How can we forest-dwellers or any other women fulfill His purposes when He is already fulfilled within Himself?” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.47.46]

*bibhrad vapuḥ sakala-sundara-sanniveśam*

*karmācaran bhuvi su-maṅgalam āpta-kāmah*

“The Lord, who bore His body as the amalgamation of everything beautiful, dutifully executed the most auspicious activities while on the earth, although He was, in fact, without any endeavor already satisfied in all desires.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.1.10]

Passages like *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha* [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.4.1] that refer to the Supreme as, “Where words cease, and where the mind cannot reach,” really mean that Brahman cannot be apprehended by the faithless, and not totally understood even by the knowers of wisdom, but must be approached by meditation and pure intuition without material desire. This topic was already discussed in [Pāda 1, Adhikarana 5](#).

*bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaścana*

“I also know all living entities; but no one knows Me.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.26]

The word *prāṇa-śarīra* means “He who is the controller of life.” Some also interpret this word to mean “He whose transcendental form is most dear.” The words *aprāṇo hy amanāḥ*—“He has neither breath nor mind”—may be interpreted either that He is supremely independent and does not need breath or mind, or that because His form is completely spiritual, He does not depend upon *prāṇa* like ordinary creatures. The *śruti-śāstra* explains *manovān*—“The Supreme has a spiritual mind”—meaning that His mind is not like ours, since He is eternal, all-pervading and all-cognizant, He knows everything that can be known through direct perception. And *ānīda-vātam*—“The Supreme has spiritual breath.”—means that He does not require air to breathe.

*Manomaya* refers to Brahman, because this word is frequently used to refer to Him in the *Upaniṣads*. All these references prove that the passage refers to the Supreme Brahman and not the individual *jīva*.

## Sūtra 1.2.2

*vivakṣita-guṇopapatteś ca*

*vivakṣita*—wished to be said; *guṇa*—qualities; *upapatteḥ*—because of being appropriate; *ca*—and.

**[The word *manomaya* here must refer to Brahman] because the qualities [given here] most appropriately [describe Brahman.]**

*Manomaya* [knowable by the pure mind], *prāṇa-śarīra* [the controller of life], *bhā-rūpa* [effulgent and glorious] and the other qualities mentioned here describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but are not at all appropriate for the *jīva*. Many scriptural passages also show that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described by the word *manomaya*:

*manomayaḥ prāṇa-śarīra-netā*

“He is understood by the pure mind [*manomaya*]. He is the guide of the body and senses.” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.7]

*sa eṣo 'ntar-hṛdaya ākāśas tasminn ayaṁ puruṣo manomayo 'mṛtamayo hiraṇmayah*

“The golden Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is full of nectar, and who is known by the pure mind [*manomaya*], resides in the sky of the heart.” [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1.6.1]

*yatroparamate cittam*

*niruddham yoga-sevayā*

*yatra caivātmanātmānam*

*paśyann ātmani tuṣyati*

“In the stage of perfection called trance, or *samādhi*, one’s mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of *yoga*. This perfection is characterized by one’s ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.20]

*hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikṛpto ya etad vidur amṛtas te bhavanti*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is known by they who have a pure heart and a pure mind. They who know Him in this way become free from death.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 7.9]

*namo namas te 'khila-mantra-devatā-*

*dravyāya sarva-kratave kriyātmāne*

*vairāgya-bhaktyātmajayānubhāvita-*

*jñānāya vidyā-gurave namo namaḥ*

“O Lord, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead and are worshipable by universal prayers, Vedic hymns and sacrificial ingredients. We offer our obeisances unto You. You can be realized by the pure mind freed from all visible and invisible material contamination. We offer our respectful obeisances to You as the supreme spiritual master of knowledge in devotional service.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.13.39]

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
animitta-nimittena  
sva-dharmenāmālātmanā  
tīvrayā mayi bhaktyā ca  
śruta-sambhṛtayā ciraṁ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: One can get liberation by seriously discharging devotional service unto Me with a pure mind, and thereby hearing for a long time about Me or from Me. By thus executing one's prescribed duties, there will be no reaction, and one will be freed from the contamination of matter.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.27.21]

*prāṇasya prāṇaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the life of all life.” [Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.18]

*bhṛtyasya paśyati gurūn api nāparādhān  
sevām manāg api kṛtām bahudhābhyupaiti  
āviṣkaroti piśuneṣv api nābhyasūyām  
śīlena nirmala-matiḥ puruṣottamo 'yam*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known as Puruṣottama, the greatest of all persons, has a pure mind. He is so gentle that even if His servant is implicated in a great offense, He does not take it very seriously. Indeed, if His servant renders some small service, the Lord accepts it as being very great. Even if an envious person blasphemes the Lord, the Lord never manifests anger against him. Such are His great qualities.” [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.138]

## Sūtra 1.2.3

*anupapattes tu na śārīraḥ*

*anupapatteḥ*—because of inappropriateness; *tu*—indeed; *na*—not; *śārīraḥ*—the *jīva*.

**[The word *manomaya* here] cannot refer to the *jīva* because the qualities [described in this passage] cannot be attributed to him.**

The *manomaya* here cannot refer to the *jīva* because it is not possible that the qualities described here refer to the tiny, glowworm-like *jīva*. For example, “He is the controller of all life. He is effulgent and glorious. His every desire is automatically fulfilled. He is all-pervading. He is the original creator of everything. He fulfills all desires. He possesses all pleasant fragrances. He is all sweetness. He is present everywhere.” All these superior transcendental qualities are impossible to ascribe to the limited *jīva*.

*aṁśo nānāvyapadeśāt*

“The living entities are parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, they are not the Supreme Brahman Himself. Their relationship with the Lord is that of dependence on the Lord.” [Brahma-sūtra 2.3.43]

*jñājñau dvāv ajāv īśānīsau  
haraḥ kṣarātmānāv īśate deva ekaḥ*

“Both the Supreme Lord and the living entities are spiritual. Of the two, the Supreme Lord is great, omnipotent, and omniscient, and the living entities are minute, subordinate spiritual sparks and therefore eligible to possess only limited knowledge and to be controlled by *māyā*. But both are eternal. Although the living entities are inexhaustible, being proud by considering themselves the enjoyers of material objects, they are prone to be conditioned by *māyā*. Both material nature and the living entities are energies of and controlled by the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is one without a second.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.9-10]

*ātmā svāśrayāśrayaḥ*

“The Supreme Being is independent of all, and therefore He is the supreme shelter.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.10.9]

## Sūtra 1.2.4

*karma-karṭṛ-vyapadeśāc ca*

*karma*—object; *karṭṛ*—agent; *vyapadeśāt*—because of the statement; *ca*—also.

**And because the distinction is drawn here between the agent and the object.**

With the words [Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.4] *etam itaḥ pretyābhisambhavitāsmi* [After death I will attain Him] at the end of the passage, the *manomaya* is clearly designated as the object of the sentence and the *jīva*, with the words *abhisambhavitāsmi* [I will attain] is clearly identified as the agent. The *manomaya*, being the object, must be different from the *jīva*, which is the agent. The *manomaya* must therefore be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The word *abhisambhavitāsmi* here describes meeting. The *jīva* meets the Supreme Lord as a great river meets the ocean. Chāndogya Upaniṣad [8.12-13] states:

*sa uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ sa tatra paryeti jakṣat krīḍan ramamāṇaḥ. tam vā etaṁ devā ātmānam  
upāsate—śyāmāc chavalaṁ prapadye śavalāc chyāmaṁ prapadye. vidhūya pāpamdhūtvā  
śarīram kṛtaṁ kṛtātmā brahma-lokam-abhisambhavāmīti*

“The topmost person is he who achieves the Supreme Lord through devotional service. He enjoys food and sports in the abode of the Lord. The demigods worship that Supreme Lord. For receiving the mercy of the Lord, I surrender unto His energy [Rādhā], and for receiving the mercy of His energy, I surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. By worshiping Them a practitioner becomes freed from all sinful reactions and, being fully satisfied, he goes to the eternal abode of the Lord.”

*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti  
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ  
tato mām tattvato jñātvā  
viśate tad-anantaram*

“One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.” [Bhagavad-gītā 18.55]

## Sūtra 1.2.5

*śabda-viśeṣāt*

*śabda*—words; *viśeṣāt*—because of the difference.

**[The word *manomaya* here cannot refer to the *jīva*] because the words are in different cases.**

The text [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.3] says *eṣa ma ātmāntar-hṛdaye*: “He is within my heart.” In these words the devotee *jīva* is placed in the genitive case and the object of his worship is placed in the nominative case. Because the *jīva* and the object of his worship are in different cases they must be two distinct persons. Therefore the *manomaya* here must be the worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is different from the devotee *jīva*. *Brhad-aranyaka Upaniṣad* [2.1] states:

*yathagneh ksudra visphulinga vyuccaranty evam evasmad atmanah sarve pranah sarve lokah  
sarve devah sarvani bhutani vyuccaranti. tasyopanisat satyasya satyam iti.*

“Just as small sparks emanate from a big fire, similarly all living entities, all planets, all the demigods, and all material elements such as the earth emanate from the supreme soul, Sri Govinda. His instructions are the supreme truth.”

*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [3.6] confirms:

*ānando brahmeti vyajānāt. ānandoddhy eva khilvimāni bhūtāni jāyante. ānandena jātāni  
jīvanti. ānandaṁ prayanty abhisamviśantīti. tad brahmety upāsīta*

“By undergoing austerity, he realized the blissful Supreme Brahman, from whom all living entities are born, by whom the living entities are maintained, and into whom the living entities enter at the time of annihilation.”

## Sūtra 1.2.6

*smṛteś ca*

*smṛteḥ*—because of the *smṛti-śāstra*; *ca*—also.

**And because of the statement of *smṛti-śāstra* also.**

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is different from the *jīva* is also confirmed by the following statement of *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.61]:

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām  
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati  
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni  
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone’s heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.”

*sa vā idaṁ viśvam amogha-līlaḥ  
srjaty avaty atti na sajjate 'smin  
bhūteṣu cāntarhita ātma-tantraḥ  
ṣāḍ-vargikaṁ jighrati ṣaḍ-guṇeśaḥ*

“The Lord, whose activities are always spotless, is the master of the six senses and is fully omnipotent with six opulences. He creates the manifested universes, maintains them and annihilates them without being in the least affected. He is within every living being and is always independent.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.36]

*sa vyāpakatayātmānaṁ vyatiriktatayātmani  
vidvān svapna ivāmarśa-sākṣīnaṁ virarāma ha*

“He [King Malayadhvaja] attained perfect knowledge by being able to distinguish the Supersoul from the individual soul. The individual soul is localized, whereas the Supersoul is all-pervasive. He became perfect in knowledge that the material body is not the soul but that the soul is the witness of the material body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.28.40]

Someone may object: “The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [3.14.3] describes the *manomaya* in the following words: *eṣa ma ātmāntar-hṛdaye 'ñīyān vrīr heva yavād vā*: ‘In my heart is the Self, smaller than a grain of rice or barley.’ This text shows that because it is very tiny, the *manomaya* must be the *jīva* and cannot be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

## Sūtra 1.2.7

*arbhakaukastvāt tad-vyapadeśāc ca neti cen na nicāyyatvād evaṁ vyomavac ca*

*arbhaka*—small; *okastvāt*—because of the residence; *tad*—of that; *vyapadeśāt*—because of the teaching; *ca*—and; *na*—not; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *nicāyyatvāt*—because of meditation; *evaṁ*—in this way; *vyomavat*—like the sky; *ca*—also.

**If it be said that the word *manomaya* here cannot refer to Brahman because here it is said that the residence of *manomaya* is very tiny, then I say no, because Brahman should be meditated on in this way, and because in the same passage the *manomaya* is said to be as great as the sky.**

For these two reasons it cannot be said that the *manomaya* is not the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this passage from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* the *manomaya* is said to be greater than the entire Earth planet. The text says *jyāyān antarīkṣāt* [He is greater than the sky]. Because the Supreme Brahman is all-pervading the word *vyomavat* [like the sky] is used in this *sūtra*.

How may these two statements, that Brahman is very small and very great, be reconciled? To answer this question he says *nicāyyatvād evaṁ* [Because Brahman should be meditated on in this way]. This means that it is said that Brahman is very small so He may become the object of meditation. This means that when in the Vedic literatures it is said that the infinite, all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead is as small as the distance between the thumb and forefinger or some other very small size, in some instances it is meant to be taken figuratively and in other places literally. In the first instance [figuratively] the devotee meditates on the Lord in his heart and in the second [literally] by His inconceivable potencies, the Lord personally appears in the heart out of kindness to His devotee.

Although the Supreme Lord has only one original form, He still manifests in many different forms to His devotees. This is described in the *smṛti-śāstra* in the words *eko 'pi san bahudhā yo 'vabhāti* [Although He is one He manifests in many forms]. Because of His inconceivable potency the Supreme Lord, although He is all-pervading, may become as small as an atom. This will be described in [Adhikarana 7](#), Sūtra 1.2.25, describing Vaiśvānara. In this way when the Supreme Personality of Godhead is manifested in a very small form, as the size of an atom or the distance between the thumb and forefinger, that very small size is present everywhere, so in this way also the Supreme Lord is all-pervading. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [1.15] states:

*evaṁ ātmātmani grhyate 'sau satyenainam tapasā yo 'nupaśyati*

“The Supersoul is situated within the core of everyone’s heart. One who searches after that Supreme Lord through meditation and austerity can see Him within his heart.”



*aṅguṣṭha-mātram amalām  
sphurat-puraṭa-maulinām  
apīvyā-darśanam śyāmām  
taḍid vāsasam acyutam*

“He [the Lord] was only thumb high, but He was all transcendental. He had a very beautiful, blackish, infallible body, and He wore a dress of lightning yellow and a helmet of blazing gold. Thus He was seen by the child.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.12.8]

*mām ātmānam svayam-jyotiḥ  
sarva-bhūta-guhāśayam  
ātmāny evātmanā vīkṣya  
viśoko 'bhayam ṛcchasi*

“In your own heart, through your intellect, you will always see Me, the supreme self-effulgent soul dwelling within the hearts of all living entities. Thus you will achieve the state of eternal life, free from all lamentation and fear.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.24.39]

Someone may object: “If the Paramātmā is then also present within the material body just as the *jīva* is, then, because of His contact with the body the Paramātmā must also feel all the pleasures and sufferings of the body just as the *jīva* does.” To answer this he says:

## Sūtra 1.2.8

*sambhoga-prāptir iti cen na vaiśeṣyāt*

*sambhoga*—of enjoyment; *prāptir*—attainment; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *vaiśeṣyāt*—because of the difference.

**If it is said that [the Paramātmā in the heart also] experiences [the pains and] pleasures [of the material body], then I say no because there is a great difference [between Him and the *jīva*].**

In the word *sambhoga* the prefix *sam-* means “with,” as it also does in the word *samvāda* [with + words = conversation]. Therefore this *Sūtra* states that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not enjoy and suffer along with the *jīva*. Why? Because of the great difference between them. This is the meaning: mere contact with a certain body does not by itself bring suffering and enjoyment. Being under the dominion of *karma* is the real cause of material suffering and enjoyment. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not under the power of the law of *karma*, for He is simply the witness and does not participate in the activities of the *jīva*. This is described in the *Upaniṣads*:

*anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti*

“Two birds sit in the metaphorical tree of the material body. One bird eats. The other bird does not eat, but only looks.” [Mundaka Upaniṣad 3.1.1]

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā  
samānam vṛkṣam pariṣvasajāte  
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty  
anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti*

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same *pippala* tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.6]

and in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.14], where Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karma-phale sprhā*

“There is no work that affects me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action.”

and in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, where the Pracetās pray:

*namaḥ kamala-kiñjalka-  
piśaṅgāmala-vāsase  
sarva-bhūta-nivāsāya  
namo 'yunkṣmahi sākṣiṇe*

“Dear Lord, the garment You have put on is yellowish in color, like the saffron of a lotus flower, but it is not made of anything material. Since You live in everyone’s heart, You are the direct witness of all the activities of all living entities. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You again and again.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.26]

and in the prayers of the personified *Vedas*:

*sa yad ajayā tv ajām anuśayīta guṇāṁś ca juṣan  
bhajati sarūpatām tad anu mṛtyum apeta-bhagaḥ  
tvam uta jahāsi tām ahir iva tvacam ātta-bhago  
mahasi mahīyase 'ṣṭa-guṇite 'parimeya-bhagaḥ*

“The illusory material nature attracts the minute living entity to embrace her, and as a result he assumes forms composed of her qualities. Subsequently, he loses all his spiritual qualities and must undergo repeated deaths. You, however, avoid the material energy in the same way that a snake abandons its old skin. Glorious in Your possession of eight mystic perfections, You enjoy unlimited opulences.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.87.38]

## ***Adhikaraṇa 2: The Eater is Brahman***

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: As we have seen above, the impersonalist doctrine is based on the process of speculation. Because the power of human intelligence is limited and subject to being illusioned by logical fallacies, the result of human reason is always uncertain. The Vedic epistemological process is to accept the verdict of the scriptures as authoritative and final, and the role of intelligence is simply to understand how to apply their instructions. This is a superior process of receiving knowledge because it does not depend on unreliable inductive logic, but applies deductive logic to the perfect wisdom received from the Lord through the scriptures.

*evam paramparā-prāptam  
imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ*

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2]

It is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* [1.2.28-29]:

*vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ  
vāsudeva-parā yogā vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ  
vāsudeva-param jñānaṁ vāsudeva-param tapaḥ  
vāsudeva-paro dharmo vāsudeva-parā gatīḥ*

“In the revealed scriptures, the ultimate object of knowledge is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. The purpose of performing sacrifice is to please Him. *Yoga* is for realizing Him. All fruitive activities are ultimately rewarded by Him only. He is supreme knowledge, and all

severe austerities are performed to know Him. Religion [*dharma*] is rendering loving service unto Him. He is the supreme goal of life.”

In his commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.45], Śrī Madhvācārya quotes the following verses:

*vede rāmāyaṇe caiva purāṇe bhārata tathā  
ādāv ante ca madhye ca hariḥ sarvatra gīyate*

“In the Vedic literature, including the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Purāṇas*, and *Mahābhārata*, from the very beginning [*ādau*] to the end [*ante ca*], as well as within the middle [*madhye ca*], only Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is explained.”

*sarve vedā yat padam āmananti*

“All Vedic knowledge is searching after the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.15]

*veda-praṇihito dharmo  
hy adharmas tad-viparyayaḥ  
vedo nārāyaṇaḥ sāksāt  
svayambhūr iti śuśrūma*

“That which is prescribed in the *Vedas* constitutes *dharma*, the religious principles, and the opposite of that is irreligion.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.40]

“The source of *dharma*, or religious principles, is the *Vedas*, the *smṛtis*, their commentaries, the conduct of *sadhus*, and the satisfaction of the soul.” [*Manu-saṁhitā* 2.6]

Thus the *Vedas* are primarily concerned with declaring the supremacy of Viṣṇu. In his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Madhvācārya quotes from the *Nāradya Purāṇa* as follows:

“It is proclaimed that the Vaiṣṇava scriptures consist of the *Pañcarātra*, the *Mahābhārata*, the original *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *Purāṇas* glorifying Lord Śiva should be adjusted so their statements do not conflict with the Vaiṣṇava literatures. Those who dishonor the *Vedas* by taking shelter of philosophies like Gautama’s *Nyāya*, Kaṇāda’s *Vaiśeṣika*, [the atheist] Kapila’s *Sāṅkhya*, Patañjali’s *Yoga*, and that found in Śaivite *Purāṇas* are of low intelligence.”

So we should understand that speculation always leads to misunderstanding, because human intelligence is limited and imperfect. The process of receiving perfect knowledge is simply hearing the Absolute Truth from a self-realized soul, or hearing directly from the Lord through the *Vedas*. Rather than taking the Vedic statements out of context and twisting them to fit a preconceived notion, to ascertain their real purport we should carefully examine them in their original context, and contemplate their meaning according to the rules of Sanskrit interpretation under the guidance of a self-realized spiritual master. This is the process of *samanvaya* explained in the Introduction. Even if the statements of the scriptures appear obscure and esoteric, we can at once understand their clear meaning by applying the principles of *samanvaya*.

For example, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.2.25] says:

*yasya brahma ca kṣātram ca  
ubhe bhavataḥ odanaḥ  
mṛtyur yasyopasecanam  
ka itthā veda yatra saḥ*

“There is a person for whom the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* are food, and death is the sauce. Who knows where this person is?”

*Samśaya* [arisal of doubt]: Here the words *odana* [food] and *upasecana* [sauce] indicate an eater. Who is the eater? Is it fire, the *jīva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: “Because there is nothing specific to show that of these three fire is not the eater, and because the questions and answers in this passage seem to indicate fire, and because the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [1.4.6] declares *agnir annādaḥ* [Fire is the eater], therefore fire is the eater in this passage. Or perhaps the *jīva* is the eater here because eating is an action and the *jīva* performs actions although the Supreme does not perform any actions. This is also confirmed by the *śruti-śāstra* [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.1 and *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 3.1] which describes an eater accompanied by a non-eater who simply looks: *tayor anyañ pappalam* ‘Two friendly birds sit on a tree. One eats the *pippala* fruit and the other does not eat but only looks.’ From all this it may be understood that the eater here is the *jīva*.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The proper understanding follows.

## Sūtra 1.2.9

*attā carācara-graṇāt*

*attā*—the eater; *cara*—the moving; *acara*—and the non-moving; *graṇāt*—because of taking.

**The eater [is Brahman] because He takes the moving and non-moving [as His food].**

The eater is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? Because of the words *carācara-graṇāt* [Because He takes the moving and non-moving as His food]. In the passage under discussion [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.25] the words *brahma kṣātram* indicate the entire universe, which is then sprinkled with the sauce of death and eaten. This passage must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because besides Him, no one can eat the entire universe. A sauce is something that, while being eaten itself, is also the cause of other things being eaten. The eating of the entire universe sprinkled with the sauce of death must refer to the periodic destruction of the material universes. In this way it is proved that the eater of the universes here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is not refuted by the statement of *Upaniṣads* [*anaśnan*] that He does not eat.

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā*  
*samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte*  
*tayor anyañ pippalam svādv atty*  
*anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti*

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same *pippala* tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.1]

The Supreme Personality of Godhead does not eat the results of *karma*, but He has His own transcendental eating.

*yathā pradīptam jvalanam pataṅgā*  
*viśanti nāśāya samṛddha-vegāḥ*  
*tathaiva nāśāya viśanti lokās*  
*tavāpi vaktrāṇi samṛddha-vegāḥ*  
  
*lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāl*  
*lokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ*  
*tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagram*  
*bhāsas tavogrāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo*

“I see all people rushing with full speed into Your mouths as moths dash into a blazing fire. O Viṣṇu, I see You devouring all people in Your flaming mouths and covering the universe with Your immeasurable rays. Scorching the worlds, You are manifest.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.29-30]

## Sūtra 1.2.10

*prakaraṇāt ca*

*prakaraṇāt*—because of the context; *ca*—also.

**This is also confirmed by the context.**

That this passage refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also confirmed by the following statement of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.2.20]:

*aṇor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest.”

This is also confirmed by the following words of *smṛti-śāstra*:

*atāsi lokasya carācarasya*

“You are the eater of this complete cosmic manifestation, of the moving and the non-moving.”

## Adhikaraṇa 3: The Associate in the Cave is Brahman

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.1-9] states:

“There are the two aspects of the Lord; as the drinkers of the truth, existing in the body obtained by good works, both dwelling in the cavity of the heart, in the most highly splendid sky. The knowers of Brahman, and those who perform the five great sacrifices and observe the triple *nāciketa* fire, describe these as shade and sun.

“I know the Lord Viṣṇu, both as the Spirit in the *nāciketa* fire, and as the refuge of all His worshipers, the imperishable Supreme Brahman, the Giver of security to the frightened voyagers on the ocean of *samsāra*, the Lord dwelling on the opposite shore as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, directing the liberated souls.

“You should know the *jīvātmā* as one seated in the chariot of the body, the intelligence as the driver and the mind as the reins.

“The wise say that the senses are the horses and their objects are the road; they also say that the spirit soul, joined with the senses and the mind but devoid of spiritual intelligence, is the sufferer

“For he who is without discrimination, with mind out of harmony, his senses are always uncontrolled like unbroken horses.

“But he who discriminates, and has his mind always harmonized, his senses are controlled like well-trained horses.

“He who is without discrimination, with uncontrolled mind, being always impure, never reaches the goal, but returns again to this world.

“But he who discriminates, and has his mind always harmonized and senses pure, certainly reaches the places where he is not born again.

“The man who has reason for his charioteer, and holds the reins of the mind, reaches the end of the road that highest place of Viṣṇu.”

The Vedic literature confirms that Brahman is concentrated transcendental knowledge, or unlimited consciousness. Vedic knowledge is given by the Supreme Lord, who is situated in everyone’s heart, to those who are anxious to realize that superconscious Supreme Being. One Vedic *mantra* [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.18] says,

*taṁ ha devam ātma-buddhi-prakāśaṁ mumukṣur vai śaraṇam ahaṁ prapadye*

“One must surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead if he at all wants liberation.”

As far as the goal of ultimate knowledge is concerned, it is also confirmed in Vedic literature:

*taṁ eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti*

“Only by knowing Him can one surpass the boundary of birth and death.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.8]

He is situated in everyone’s heart as the supreme controller and eternal friend of the living entity. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.2.20] states:

*aṇor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān  
ātmāsya jantor nihito guhāyām  
taṁ akratuḥ paśyati vīta-śoko  
dhātuḥ prasādān mahimānam ātmanaḥ*

“Both the Supersoul [Paramātmā] and the atomic soul [jīvātmā] are situated on the same tree of the body within the same heart of the living being, and only one who has become free from all material desires as well as lamentations can, by the grace of the Supreme, understand the glories of the soul.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.1] quoted above states:

*ṛtaṁ pibantau sukr̥tasya loke  
guhāṁ praviṣṭau parame parārdhe  
chāyā-tapau brahma-vido vadanti  
pañcāgnayo ye ca trināciketāḥ*

“Two persons drink the results of *karma* in the cave of the heart. They who know Brahman, they who keep the five sacred fires, and they who perform the three *nāciketa* sacrifices say these two persons are shade and light.”

In this passage a companion to the *jīva*, who experiences the results of *karma*, is described. This companion may be interpreted to be either intelligence, life-breath, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The companion here must be either intelligence or life-breath for they assist the *jīva* as he experiences the results of *karma*. The companion cannot be the Supreme Personality of Godhead for the Supreme Lord never experiences the results of *karma*. Therefore the companion must be either intelligence or life-breath.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

## Sūtra 1.2.11

*guhāṁ praviṣṭāv ātmānau hi tad darśanāt*

*guhām*—in the cave; *praviṣṭāu*—entered; *ātmānau*—two selves; *hi*—indeed; *tat*—that; *darśanāt*—because of being seen in other passages of Vedic literature.

**The two persons that have entered the cave of the heart are the two selves [the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the *jīva*] because this explanation is seen in Vedic literature.**

The two persons that have entered the cave of the heart are the *jīva* and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, not the *jīva* and intelligence, and not the *jīva* and the life-breath. Why? The *Sūtra* says *tad darśanāt* [because this explanation is seen in Vedic literature].

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [2.1.7] says that the *jīva* has entered the cave of the heart:

*yā prāṇena sambhavaty  
aditir devatāmayī  
guhām praviśya tiṣṭhantīm  
yā bhūtebhir vyajāyata*

“Accompanied by the life-breath and a host of powers, the *jīva*, who is the king of the senses, enters the cave of the heart.”

Another verse [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.12] says that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has entered the cave of the heart:

*taṁ durdarśaṁ gūḍhaṁ anupraviṣṭaṁ  
guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭaṁ purāṇaṁ  
adhyātma-yogādhigamena devaṁ  
matvā dhīro harṣa-śokau jahāti*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the oldest person, and who is worshiped in the jungle of this world, remains hidden in the cave of the heart. A wise man, meditating on Him in a trance of spiritual *yoga*, gives up all material joy and grief.”

The word *hi* [indeed] in this *Sūtra* means “This is indeed corroborated by all the *Purāṇas*.”

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman  
yogeśa jagad-īśvara  
vāsudevākhilāvāsa  
sātvatām pravara prabho  
tvam ātmā sarva-bhūtānām  
eko jyotir ivaidhasām  
gūḍho guhā-śayaḥ sākṣī  
mahā-puruṣa īśvaraḥ*

[Nārada Muni said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, unlimited Lord, source of all mystic power, Lord of the universe! O Vāsudeva, shelter of all beings and best of the Yadus! O master, You are the Supreme Soul of all created beings, sitting unseen within the cave of the heart like the fire dormant within kindling wood. You are the witness within everyone, the Supreme Personality and the ultimate controlling Deity. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.37.10-11]

The word *pibantau* [they both drink] in the passage of the *Upaniṣad* is used in the same sense as the phrase “the two parasol-bearers.” Although only one of the pair carries the parasol, they are still known as “the two parasol-bearers.” In the same way only one of the two ‘drinkers’ here actually drinks. The Supreme Lord never becomes entangled in the actions and reactions of material nature, because He is the source and controller of material nature. The word *chāyā-tapau* [shade and light] here means either

that the knowledge of the two persons is different, or it means that one of the persons is bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death and the other is free from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.1] it is said:

*ṛtaṁ pibantau sukr̥tasya loke  
guhāṁ praviṣṭau parame parārdhe  
chāyātapau brahmavido vadanti  
pañcāgnayo ye ca tri-ṇāciketāḥ*

“O Nāciketā, the expansions of Lord Viṣṇu as the tiny living entity and the Supersoul are both situated within the cave of the heart of this body. Having entered that cavity, the living entity, resting on the chief of the life airs, enjoys the results of activities, and the Supersoul, acting as witness enables him to enjoy them. Those who are well-versed in knowledge of Brahman and those householders who carefully follow the Vedic regulations say that the difference between the two is like the difference between a shadow and the sun.”

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [6.16] it is said:

*sa viśvakṛd viśvavidātmayoniḥ  
jñāḥ kālākāro guṇī sarvavid yaḥ  
pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ  
saṁsāra-mokṣa-sthiti-bandha-hetuḥ*

“The Supreme Lord, the creator of this cosmic manifestation, knows every nook and corner of His creation. Although He is the cause of creation, there is no cause for His appearance. He is fully aware of everything. He is the Supersoul, the master of all transcendental qualities, and He is the master of this cosmic manifestation in regard to bondage to the conditional state of material existence and liberation from that bondage.”

## Sūtra 1.2.12

*viśeṣaṇāc ca*

*viśeṣaṇāt*—because of distinctive qualities; *ca*—also.

**Also because of the differences between them.**

In the section of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* in which the verse under discussion appears, the *jīva* and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are carefully distinguished; the *jīva* is described as the meditator, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the object of meditation. Thus *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.12, quoted above, distinguishes one as the meditator and the other as the object of meditation. In *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.1, in the words *chāyā-tapau* [shade and light] they are again distinguished: one being all-knowing and the other having only a small sphere of knowledge.

*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.9 explains:

*vijñāna-sārathir yas tu  
manaḥ-pragrahavān naraḥ  
so 'dhvanaḥ pāram āpnoti  
tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*

“A person who has transcendental knowledge as his charioteer and who carefully holds the reins of the mind reaches the end of the path: the transcendental realm of Lord Viṣṇu.”

*kaścid dhīraḥ pratyag ātmānam aikṣad āvṛtta-caḥsur amṛtatvam icchan*



“With a desire to attain immortality, a sober practitioner sees the Supreme Lord while closing his eyes,” [Kāṭha Upaniṣad 2.1.1]

*jñāna-prasādena viśuddha-sattvas tu taṁ paśyate niṣkalaṁ dhyāyamānaḥ*

“If by the mercy of spiritual knowledge one meditates on the unchangeable, pure Supreme Lord, he can get *darśana* of Him.” [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.8]

In these words they are again distinguished: one being the goal to be attained and the other the person who attains the goal. Thus there is no doubt that the relation between the individual soul and the Supersoul is like shade and light, or atomic part and Supreme Whole.

## **Adhikaraṇa 4: The Person in the Eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [4.15.1-6] we read:

He said: “He who is seen in the eye is called the *ātmā*. He is immortal, He is nectar. He is the greatest. Because He is present, neither water nor liquid butter will stay on the eye, but both will slide from it. He is the abode of all opulences. For one who sees Him all desires are at once fulfilled.

“The wise call Him *samyadvāma* [the most beautiful] because He is the abode of all opulences. For one who sees Him, all desires are at once fulfilled.

“He is called *Vāmana* because He alone is the origin of all beauty. He who knows Him also becomes most beautiful.

“He is also called *Bhāmani*, because He shines resplendently in all the worlds. He who knows Him, also becomes resplendent.

“Now when such persons die, whether their relatives perform their *śraddha* ceremony or not, they go to the plane of light, from the plane of light to the plane of the day, from the plane of the day to the plane of the *śukla-pakṣa* [bright fortnight], from the plane of the *śukla-pakṣa* to the plane of the *uttarāyaṇa* [the six months when the sun travels in the north], from the plane of the *uttarāyaṇa* to the solar plane, from the solar plane to the lunar plane, from the lunar plane to the plane of *Sarasvatī*, and from the plane of *Sarasvatī* to the plane of the chief *Vāyu*, who is her Lord and the beloved of God.

“He leads them to Brahman. This is the path guarded by the *devas*, the path that leads to Brahman. Those who proceed on that path do not return to *saṁsāra*, yea, they do not return.”

The process of philosophical speculation is basically guesswork; there is never final certainty in the conclusion. Human knowledge and reason are imperfect; one philosopher or scientist may publish a certain theory, then after some time it is usurped by another researcher with a better theory. Although this happens again and again, they argue that “Our knowledge is gradually improving, and someday it will be perfect.” But why should we wait for an indefinite someday, when we can accept perfect knowledge from the *Vedas* today?

The materialist wants to understand everything by the *āroha-panthā*—by the ascending process of argument and inductive logic—but transcendental matters cannot be understood in this way, because they are beyond the jurisdiction of the material mind and senses. Rather, one must follow the *avaroha-panthā*, the process of descending knowledge or deductive logic. The word *avaroha* is related to the word *avatāra*, which means “one who descends.” Therefore one must accept the *paramparā* system. And the best *paramparā* is that which extends from Kṛṣṇa, the original form of the Supreme Brahman.

*evam paramparā-prāptam imam rājarṣayo viduḥ*

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in this way.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.2]

Whatever Kṛṣṇa says, we should accept [*imam rājarṣayo viduḥ*]. This is the descending process of certainty, *avaroha-panthā*. Śrīla Madhvācārya has quoted the following statement from the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*:

“One should have complete faith in transcendental literature such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other literature that directly glorifies the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should also have faith in Vaiṣṇava-*tantras*, the original *Vedas*, and *Mahābhārata*, which includes *Bhagavad-gītā* and which is considered the fifth *Veda*. The Vedic knowledge originally emanated from the breathing of Viṣṇu, and Vedic literature has been compiled in literary form by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of Viṣṇu. Therefore, Lord Viṣṇu should be understood to be the personal speaker of all this Vedic literature.”

One who takes wholehearted shelter of the Vedic wisdom with firm faith, under the guidance of an authentic self-realized spiritual master, can actually see the Supreme Truth.

*yasya deve parā bhaktir  
yathā deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ  
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23]

There is no need for materialistic speculation and guesswork, because we can receive perfect knowledge of spiritual life directly from the Lord through the Vedic literature.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [4.15.1-2] says:

*ya eṣo 'ntar-akṣiṇi puruṣo drśyate sa eṣa ātmeti hovāca. etad amṛtam ayam etad brahma tad yad yad asmin sarpir vodakam vā siñcati vartmani eva gacchati. etam sampad-dhāma ity ācakṣate etam hi sarvāṇi kāmāny abhisamṇanti*

“He said: He who is seen in the eye is called the *ātmā*. He is immortal, He is nectar. He is the greatest. Because He is present, neither water nor liquid butter will stay on the eye, but both will slide from it. The wise call Him *samyadvāma* [the most beautiful] because He is the abode of all opulences. For one who sees Him all desires are at once fulfilled.”

Is this person a reflection, a demigod, the *jīva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: It may be a reflection, for the observer sees himself reflected in another's eye. It may be a demigod because *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* [5.5.2] says *raśmibhir eṣo 'smin pratiṣṭhitah*: “With the rays of sunlight the sun-god enters the eye.” It may be the *jīva* because a person sees with his eyes, so he may also be the person in the eye. In this way the person in the eye may be any one of these three.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The authoritative Vedic conclusion follows, ending all speculation.

## **Sūtra 1.2.13**

*antara upapatteḥ*

*antaraḥ*—the person within; *upapatteḥ*—because of reason.

**The person within [the eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because [that conclusion is dictated] by reason.**

The person in the eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The *Sūtra* says *upapatteḥ*: “Because that conclusion is dictated by reason.” This is so because, in the quote from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, the description of the qualities of the person in the eye includes being the Supreme Self [*ātmā*], immortality [*amṛta*], being the greatest [*brahma*], being untouched by material things, and being the abode of all opulences [*sampad-dhāma*]. These qualities can properly be attributed only to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

But we cannot know Him by the ascending speculative process, therefore we must receive Vedic knowledge from a self-realized soul, the qualified spiritual master.

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya  
jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena  
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

“I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.” [traditional Vedic prayer]

## **Sūtra 1.2.14**

*sthānādi-vyapadeśāc ca*

*sthāna*—the place; *ādi*—beginning with; *vyapadeśāt*—because of the statement; *ca*—also.

**And also because of the teaching [in the scriptures that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is present] in this place and in other places as well.**

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the controller who resides with the eye is described in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.7.18]:

*yaś cakṣuṣi tiṣṭhaṁś cakṣuṣo 'ntaro yaṁ cakṣur na veda yasya cakṣur śarīraṁ yaś cakṣur  
antaro yaṁ ayaty eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ*

“He who stays in the eye, who is within, whom the eye does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the eye and the body, and who, residing within, controls the eye, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.”

The ordinary eyes cannot see the transcendental Supreme Person, because in our conditioned state of consciousness, our vision is covered by illusion. This is an arrangement by the Supreme Brahman to satisfy our desire to live independently from Him:

*yathā ghano 'rka-prabhavo 'rka-darśito  
hy arkāṁśa-bhūtasya ca cakṣuṣas tamaḥ  
evaṁ tv ahaṁ brahma-guṇas tad-īkṣito  
brahmāṁśakasyātmāna ātma-bandhanaḥ*

“Although a cloud is a product of the sun and is also made visible by the sun, it nevertheless creates darkness for the viewing eye, which is another partial expansion of the sun. Similarly, material false ego, a particular product of the Absolute Truth made visible by the Absolute Truth, obstructs the individual soul, another partial expansion of the Absolute Truth, from realizing the Absolute Truth.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.4.32]

But by hearing for a long time from a pure devotee spiritual master about the exalted character, qualities and activities of the Supreme Brahman, we gradually develop love for Him. This loving service mood is the cure for the spiritual blindness of illusion. Thus we can see Him, not with ordinary vision, but with the eye of love within the heart.

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena  
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti  
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion, tinged with the salve of love.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.38]

### Sūtra 1.2.15

*sukha-viśiṣṭābhīdhānād eva*

*sukha*—by happiness; *viśiṣṭa*—distinguished; *abhīdhānāt*—because of the description; *eva*—indeed.

**Also because He is described as [full of] bliss.**

This *Sūtra* refers to *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [4.10.5], which says *prāṇo brahma kaṁ brahma khaṁ brahma*: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is life; the Supreme Personality of Godhead is bliss; the Supreme Personality of Godhead is sky.” The discussion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead beginning with these words continues through some paragraphs up to the verse under discussion in this *Adhikaraṇa* [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4.15.1], describing the person in the eye. For this reason the person in the eye must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is also a discussion of *agni-vidyā* between 4.10.5 and 4.15.1; however, the interpolation of *agni-vidyā* does not break the context, because *agni-vidyā* is a subordinate part of the discussion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The word *viśiṣṭa* [distinguished] in this *Sūtra* means that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has complete knowledge, bliss and all other transcendental qualities in His original form as Govinda, the transcendental cowherd boy.

*sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya  
kṛṣṇāyākliṣṭa-kāriṇe  
namo vedānta-vedyāya  
gurave buddhi-sāksīṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa, who has a transcendental form of bliss, eternity and knowledge. I offer my respect to Him, because understanding Him means understanding the *Vedas* and He is therefore the supreme spiritual master.” [*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.1]

*tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham*

“You are Govinda, the pleasure of the senses and the cows, and Your form is transcendental, full of knowledge, bliss and eternality.” [*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.35]

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ  
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
anādir ādir govindaḥ  
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“Kṛṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. His eternal spiritual body is full of complete knowledge and bliss. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin, for He is the prime cause of all other causes.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1]

## Sūtra 1.2.16

*śrutopaniṣatka-gaty-abhidhānāc ca*

*śruta*—heard; *upaniṣatka*—*Upaniṣad*; *gati*—destination; *abhidhānāt*—because of the description; *ca*—also.

**And because of the description of the destination of they who hear the *Upaniṣads*.**

One who hears the *Upaniṣads* and understands the confidential knowledge of the *Vedas* travels to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Of the person who knows the person in the eye, Upakośala Muni says *arciṣam abhisambhavati*: “He attains the realm of light.” Because these two persons—he who knows the esoteric teaching of the *Vedas* and he who knows the person in the eye—attain the same destination, it must be understood that the person in the eye is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

One who understands the confidential meaning of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* does not want to become one with the Lord; nor does he wish to attain the heavenly planets for extensive sense enjoyment. His destination is the spiritual world, where he can meet the Supreme Brahman face-to-face and engage in eternal service to Him.

*pūṣann ekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya  
vyūha raśmīn samūha  
tejo yat te rūpaṁ kalyāṇa-tamaṁ  
tat te paśyāmi yo 'sāv asau puruṣaḥ so 'ham asmi*

“O my Lord, O primeval philosopher, maintainer of the universe, O regulating principle, destination of the pure devotees, well-wisher of the progenitors of mankind, please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays so that I can see Your form of bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I.” [*Śrī Īśopaniṣad, Mantra 16*]

*avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas  
tam āhuḥ paramām gatim  
yam prāpya na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama*

“That supreme abode is called unmanifested and infallible, and it is the supreme destination. When one goes there, he never comes back. That is My supreme abode.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.21]

## Sūtra 1.2.17

*anavasthiter asambhavāc ca netaraḥ*

*anavasthiteḥ*—because the abode is not eternal; *asambhavāt*—because of being impossible; *ca*—and; *na*—not; *itaraḥ*—anyone else.

**[The person in the eye] is not anyone else [but the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because [the others] do not stay always in the eye and because it cannot be them [according to the context].**

These other persons cannot be the person in the eye because none of them stay permanently in the eye, and because none of them possess immortality or any of the other qualities attributed to the person in the eye. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is therefore the person in the eye referred to in this text.

*nirbhinne akṣiṇī tvaṣṭā  
loka-pālo 'viśad vibhoḥ  
cakṣuṣāṁśena rūpāṇām  
pratipattir yato bhavet*

“Thereafter, the two eyes of the gigantic form of the Lord were separately manifested. The sun, the director of light, entered them with the partial representation of eyesight, and thus the living entities can have vision of forms.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.6.15]

The living entities cannot perceive the material world independently, because their nature is completely spiritual. The Supreme Personality of Godhead expands Himself as light and as the eye, so we can see. We can sense the material world only by the extraordinary potency of the Lord. Therefore by conclusive Vedic knowledge we can understand that the Lord is the person in the eye.

## **Adhikaraṇa 5: The Internal Ruler is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The principle of material creation is a sum total manifestation of the three modes of material nature, technically called the *pradhāna*.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
yat tat tri-guṇam avyaktam  
nityam sad-asad-ātmakam  
pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prāhur  
aviśeṣam viśeṣavat*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “The unmanifested eternal combination of the three modes is the cause of the manifest state and is called *pradhāna*. It is called *prakṛti* when in the manifested stage of existence.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.10]

Material nature in its subtle stage is called *pradhāna*, the undifferentiated sum total of all material elements. Although they are undifferentiated, the total material elements are contained in *pradhāna*. When the total material elements are manifested by the interaction of the three modes of material nature with the force of time, the manifestation is called *prakṛti*.

Impersonalists argue that Brahman is without variegatedness or differentiation. They try to equate *pradhāna* with Brahman, but actually Brahman is not *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is distinct from Brahman, because there are no material modes of nature in Brahman. One may argue that the *mahat-tattva* is also different from *pradhāna* because in the *mahat-tattva* there are manifestations. The actual explanation of *pradhāna*, however, is given above: *pradhāna* is the stage of material nature when the actions and reactions of cause and effect are unmanifested [*avyakta*]. Therefore *pradhāna* and the *mahat-tattva* are identical.

*Pradhāna* is not the time element because in the time element there are actions and reactions, creation and annihilation. Nor is it the *jīva*, the Lord’s marginal potency of living entities, or designated conditioned living entities, because the designations of the living entities are not eternal. The adjective *nitya* in the verse above indicates eternality. Therefore *pradhāna* is the external creative potency of the Lord, and specifically the condition of material nature immediately previous to its manifestation. It is stated in the *Sātvata-tantra*:

*viṣṇos tu trīṇi rūpāṇi  
puruṣākhyāny atho viduḥ  
ekam tu mahataḥ sraṣṭṛ  
dviṭīyaṁ tv aṇḍa-saṁsthitam  
trīṭīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-stham  
tāni jñātvā vimucyate*

“For material creation, Lord Kṛṣṇa's plenary expansion assumes three Viṣṇus. The first one, Mahā-Viṣṇu, creates the total material energy, known as the *mahat-tattva*. The second, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, enters into all the universes to create diversities in each of them. The third, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, is diffused as the all-pervading Supersoul in all the universes and is known as Paramātmā. He is present even within the atoms. Anyone who knows these three Viṣṇus can be liberated from material entanglement.”

The material creation is the external, inferior potency of the Supreme Brahman. The Vedic hymns *sarvaṁ hy etad brahma* [*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 2], *tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpam annaṁ ca jāyate* [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.10], and, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.3], *mama yonir mahad brahma* indicate that everything in the material world is a manifestation of Brahman; and although the effects are differently manifested, they are nondifferent from the cause. In the *Īsopaniṣad* it is said that everything is related to the Supreme Brahman, or Kṛṣṇa, and thus everything belongs to Him only.

*ātmaivedam agra āsīt puruṣa-vidhaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa) existed even before the appearance of the *puruṣa* incarnations.” [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.1]

One who knows perfectly well that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, that He is the proprietor of everything and that, therefore, everything should be engaged in the service of the Lord, is never affected by the results of his activities, whether virtuous or sinful. This practice of *karma-yoga* is the actual secret of liberation. When one's material body, being a gift of the Lord for carrying out a particular type of action, is fully engaged in activities of devotional service, it is then beyond contamination by sinful reactions; exactly as the lotus leaf, though remaining in the water, does not get wet. The Lord also says in *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.31-32],

*ye me matam idaṁ nityam  
anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ  
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto  
mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ  
  
ye tv etad abhyasūyanto  
nānutiṣṭhanti me matam  
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāms tān  
viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ*

“One who executes his duties according to My injunctions and who follows this teaching faithfully, without envy, becomes free from the bondage of fruitive actions. But those who, out of envy, disregard these teachings and do not practice them regularly, are to be considered bereft of all knowledge, befooled, and doomed to ignorance and bondage.”

The mundane speculators do not surrender to the Lord, but follow their own desires for fruitive activity and sense enjoyment. Therefore they try to make the Lord impersonal, or at best, also subject to the material actions and reactions of *karma*. They misinterpret the statements of the scriptures to force a conclusion that allows them to continue their independent activities. Of course, this subjects them to the full force of their karmic reactions, meaning they must accept an unending succession of material

bodies and experience the sufferings concomitant with material existence without relief. This is the terrible price of their independent, rebellious spirit.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.18 says:

*yaḥ pṛthivyām tiṣṭhan pṛthivyā antaro yaḥ pṛthivī na veda yasya pṛthivī śarīraṁ yaḥ pṛthivīm antaro yaḥ ayaty eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ...*

“He who stays in the earth, who is within, whom the earth does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the earth and the body, and who, residing within, rules the earth, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.

“He who stays in the water, who is within, whom the water does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the water and the body, and who, residing within, rules the water, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.

“He who stays in the fire, who is within, whom the fire does not know, who is the ultimate proprietor of the fire and the body, and who, residing within, rules the fire, is the immortal Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who resides in the heart.”

In this verse is the ruler who lives within the earth and other elements *pradhāna*, the *jīva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The ruler within may be *pradhāna* because *pradhāna* resides within. The cause is always woven into the effect, and is the controller of the effect. Because *pradhāna* is the cause of the earth, *pradhāna* must therefore be the controller within the earth also. Because it gives happiness and because it is all-pervading, the *pradhāna* may be figuratively called *ātmā* [the great self]. Because it is eternal it may also be called *amṛta* [eternal].

Or, the ruler within may be a certain *jīva* who is a great *yogī*. With the yogic powers of entering everywhere and becoming invisible at will, a great *yogī* may become the ruler [within] and with this ruling power, the ability to become invisible and other yogic powers, he may be called *ātmā* [the great self], and *amṛta* [eternal] in the direct senses of the words without resorting to figurative language. In this way the ruler within must be either the *pradhāna* or a *jīva*.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

## Sūtra 1.2.18

*antaryāmy adhidaivādiṣu tad-dharma-vyapadeśāt*

*antaryāmī*—the ruler within; *adhidaiva*—the elements; *ādiṣu*—beginning with; *tat*—of Him; *dharma*—the nature; *vyapadeśāt*—because of the description.

**The ruler who resides within the elements [is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because His qualities are described [in this passage].**

The ruler within described in these words of *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The *Sūtra* says *tad-dharma-vyapadeśāt*: “Because His qualities are described in this passage. The Supreme Person is described here because the qualities of the person described here, which include being situated within the earth and all other material elements, being unknowable, being the supreme controller, and being all-pervading, all-knowing, all-blissful, and eternal, are all qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*panthās tu koṭi-śata-vatsara-sampragamyō  
vāyor athāpi manaso muni-puṅgavānām*



*so 'py asti yat-prapada-sīmny a vicintya-tattve  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, only the tips of the toes of whose lotus feet are approached by the *yogīs* and *jñānīs*, who travel for billions of years at the speed of the wind or mind.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.34]

*bhūtair mahadbhir ya imāḥ puro vibhur  
nirmāya śete yad amūṣu pūruṣaḥ  
bhunkte guṇān ṣoḍaśa ṣoḍaśātmakāḥ  
so 'laṅkrṣīṣṭa bhagavān vacāmsi me*

“May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who enlivens the materially created bodies of the elements by lying down within the universe, and who in His *puruṣa* incarnation causes the living beings to be subjected to the sixteen divisions of material modes which are their generators, be pleased to decorate my statements.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.4.23]

*yathā mahānti bhūtāni  
bhūteṣūccāveṣv anu  
praviṣṭāny apraviṣṭāni  
tathā teṣu na teṣv aham*

“O Brahmā, please know that the universal elements enter into the cosmos and at the same time do not enter into the cosmos; similarly, I Myself also exist within everything created, and at the same time I am outside of everything.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.35]

*puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca*

“I am the original fragrance of the earth.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.9]

## Sūtra 1.2.19

*na ca smārtam atad-dharmābhilāpāt*

*na*—not; *ca*—and; *smārtam*—what is taught in the *smṛti*; *atad*—not of it; *dharma*—the qualities; *abhilāpāt*—because of description.

**The ruler within is not [the *pradhāna*, which is] described in the *smṛti*, because the qualities [mentioned in this passage] cannot be attributed [to *pradhāna*].**

For these reasons it may not be said that the *pradhāna*, which is described in the *smṛti*, is the ruler within. Why? The *Sūtra* says *atad-dharmābhilāpāt*: “Because the qualities mentioned in this passage cannot be attributed to it.”

The *Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.7.23] says:

*adṛṣṭo draṣṭā āsruto śrotā amato mantā avijñāto vijñātā nānyato 'sti draṣṭā nānyato 'sti śrotā  
nānyato 'sti mantā nānyato 'sti vijñātaiṣa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛta ito 'nyat smārtam*

“Unobserved, He is the observer. Unheard, He is the hearer. Inconceivable, He is the thinker. Unknown, he is the knower. There is no other observer. There is no other hearer. There is no other thinker. There is no other knower. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the eternal ruler within. [The *pradhāna*] described in the *smṛti* is different from Him.”

The list of qualities here, beginning with being the observer, may be attributed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone.

*sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam*  
*sarvendriya-vivarjitam*  
*asaktam sarva-bhṛc caiva*  
*nirguṇam guṇa-bhoktr ca*

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all the modes of material nature.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.15]

In the *smṛti* it is said:

*pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ*

“The Supreme Lord as the Supersoul is the chief knower of the body, and He is the master of the three modes of material nature [*pradhāna*].” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.16]

## Sūtra 1.2.20

*śarīraś cobhaye 'pi hi bhedenainam adhīyate*

*śarīraḥ*—the *jīva*; *ca*—also; *ubhaye*—in both recensions; *api*—also; *hi*—indeed; *bhedena*—by the difference; *enam*—this; *adhīyate*—is read.

**The ruler within is not a *jīva* because in both [recensions of the *Upaniṣad*] the *jīva* is described as different from Him.**

The word *na* [not] from the preceding *Sūtra* should be understood in this *Sūtra* also. For the reasons already given it cannot be said that a *jīva* who is a great *yogī* is the ruler within. Why? The *Sūtra* answers *hi*, which means “because,” *ubhaye* [in both], which means “in both the Kāṇva and Mādhyandina recensions of the *Upaniṣad*,” *enam* [He], which means “the ruler within,” *bhedena adhīyate* [is described as different].

[The Kāṇva recension gives] *yo vijñānam antaro yamayati* [The transcendental knowledge that rules within] and [the Mādhyandina recension, gives] *ya ātmānam antaro yamayati* [The Supreme Personality of Godhead who rules within]. In both readings is a clear distinction between the ruler and the ruled. Therefore the ruler within is Lord Hari, the Personality of Godhead.

In the *smṛti* it is said:

*dāsa-bhūto harer eva nānyasvaiva kadācana*

“The living entities are eternally in the service of the Supreme Lord.”

In the *Subala Upaniṣad* the Kaṭhas say:

*pṛthivy-ādīnām avyaktākṣarāmṛtaāntānām śrī-nārāyaṇo 'ntaryāmī*

“Lord Nārāyaṇa is the ruler within the earth and other elements, within the unmanifested *pradhāna*, and within the unchanging, eternal *jīva*].”

The *Brāhmaṇas* say:

*antaḥ-śarīre nihito guhāyām*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead stays in the heart of the *jīva*”

*aja eko nityaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is unborn, eternal, and one without a second

*yasya pṛthivī śarīraṁ yaḥ pṛthivīm antare sañcaran yaṁ pṛthivī na veda*

“The earth is His body. He stays within the earth. The earth does not understand Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

## **Adhikaraṇa 6: "Akṣara" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: There are two kinds of living entities: *kṣara* [diminishing] and *akṣara* [undiminishing]. *Kṣara* refers to those who have fallen down into material existence and become conditioned, and *akṣara* refers to those who remain unconditioned, in their original eternal spiritual position. The vast majority of living entities live in the spiritual world and are called *akṣara*. They are in the position of Brahman, pure spiritual existence. Although both types of living entities are spiritual by nature, the unconditioned *akṣara* are qualitatively superior to the *kṣara*, who have been conditioned by the three modes of material nature.

Above both the *kṣara* and *akṣara* living entities is the Supreme Brahman Lord Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, who is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* [15.18] as Puruṣottama, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham  
akṣarād api cottamaḥ  
ato 'smi loke vede ca  
prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ*

“Because I am transcendental, beyond both the fallible and the infallible, and because I am the greatest, I am celebrated both in the world and in the *Vedas* as that Supreme Person.”

The impersonalists may theorize that Vāsudeva is the impersonal Brahman, but actually the impersonal Brahman is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.27]:

*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham  
amṛtasyāvyayasya ca  
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya  
sukhasyaikāntikasya ca*

“And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness.”

That Kṛṣṇa is the source of the impersonal Brahman is also confirmed in *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.40:

*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-  
koṭīṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnaṁ  
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose effulgence is the source of the undifferentiated Brahman mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*, which being differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe, appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless truth.”

The impersonal Brahman is nothing but the effulgence or bodily rays of Kṛṣṇa, and in those bodily rays there are innumerable universes floating. Thus Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, is the Supreme Lord in all respects. Yet the Māyāvādīs try to describe Him as impersonal or identical with Brahman.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.5-6] says:

*atha parā yayā tad akṣaram adhigamyate. yat tad adreśyam agrāhyam agotram avarṇam  
acakṣuḥ-śrotram tad apāṇi-pādaṁ nityaṁ vibhuṁ sarva-gataṁ su-sūkṣmaṁ tad avyayaṁ yad  
bhūta-yoniṁ paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*

“Here is the transcendental knowledge by which the Supreme Personality of Godhead is known. The great sages directly see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who cannot be seen, who cannot be grasped, who has no name, who has no color, who has no eyes or ears, who has no hands or feet, who is eternal, all-powerful, all-pervading, subtle, and changeless, and who is the Creator of all that is.”

Later the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [2.1.2] also says:

*divyo hy amūrtaḥ puruṣaḥ sa-bāhyābhyantaro hy ajaḥ aprāṇo hy amanāḥ śubhro 'kṣarāt  
parataḥ paraḥ*

“The Supreme Person is transcendental, formless, without inside or out, unborn, unbreathing, without mind, splendid, and higher than the highest of the eternals.”

Do these two passages describe first the *pradhāna* and then the *puruṣa* [*jīva*], or do they describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Because in these passages there is no mention of being the observer or any other qualities of a conscious being, and because there is mention of the word *yonī* [source of everything], which refers to the ingredient of which the creation is made, these passages describe the eternal *pradhāna*, and above that eternal *pradhāna*, the *puruṣa* [*jīva*]. Above the eternal, ever-changing *pradhāna* is the *jīva*, who is the knower of the field of activities. Therefore in these passages the *pradhāna* and *jīva* should be known to be the topics of discussion.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

## Sūtra 1.2.21

*adr̥śyatvādi-guṇako dharmokteḥ*

*adr̥śyatva*—being invisible; *ādi*—beginning with; *guṇako*—qualities; *dharma*—qualities; *ukteḥ*—because of the statement.

**[These passages describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead,] who possesses many transcendental qualities, including invisibility, because His qualities are described here.**

In both passages the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses many transcendental qualities, including invisibility, should be understood [to be the topic of discussion]. Why? The *Sūtra* says *dharmokteḥ* [because His qualities are described here].

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.9] says:

*yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarvavid yasya jñānamayaṁ tapaḥ. tasmād etad brahma nāma-rūpam annaṁ ca  
jāyate*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead knows everything. He knows everything. He is full of knowledge. From Him is born that Brahman that is the material form of this world.”

Because in the passage of *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.6] that begins *divyo hy amūrtaḥ puruṣaḥ*: “The Supreme Person is transcendental and formless,” the *akṣara* is described as possessing a host of transcendental qualities, including omniscience, and because the *akṣara* is described as the ultimate goal of all knowledge, the *akṣara* must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Although He is described as formless, this simply means that His form is not material but fully spiritual.

*rūpaṁ bhagavato yat tan  
manaḥ-kāntaṁ śucāpahaṁ*

“That transcendental form of the Lord satisfies the mind’s desire and at once erases all mental incongruities.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.6.18]

*avyaktaṁ vyaktim āpannam  
manyante mām abuddhayaḥ  
paraṁ bhāvaṁ ajānanto  
mamāvyayam anuttamaṁ*

“Unintelligent men, who know Me not, think that I have assumed this form and personality. Due to their small knowledge, they do not know My higher nature, which is changeless and supreme.” [Bhagavad-gītā 7.24]

That the Lord is not formless is experienced by every pure devotee who attains His *darśana*. But His form is completely different from all material forms. For our whole duration of life we see different forms in the material world, but no form in the material world can satisfy the seer; none of them can satisfy the mind, nor can any of them vanish all mental incongruity and disturbance. These are unique features of the transcendental form of the Lord, and one who has even once seen His form is not satisfied with anything else. That the Lord is formless or impersonal means that His form is not material, and He is not like any material personality.

Similarly, being described as without breath or mind indicates that His breathing and mind are not material. As stated in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.2.23]:

*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaṣ  
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām*

“Only one who is fully surrendered and engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can understand the Supreme Lord as He is.”

## Sūtra 1.2.22

*viśeṣaṇa-bheda-vyapadeśābhyāṁ ca netarau*

*viśeṣaṇa*—modifiers; *bheda*—difference; *vyapadeśābhyāṁ*—because of the description; *ca*—and; *na*—not; *itarau*—the other two.

**Because of the description of the qualities [of the *akṣara*] in these two [passages, the *akṣara*] cannot be the other two [*pradhāna* and *jīva*].**

The other two, that is *pradhāna* and *jīva*, should not be thought [to be the topic of discussion here]. Why? the *Sūtra* says *viśeṣaṇa* [because of the description of the qualities]. Because the description in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.9], beginning with the words *yaḥ sarvajña* [The Supreme Personality of Godhead knows everything], specifically identifies the *akṣara* as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and because the description in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.1.6], beginning with the word *divya* [The Supreme Person is transcendental], identifies the *akṣara* as a being different from the *jīva*, therefore the *akṣara* mentioned in both passages must be understood to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original cause of all causes.

*vāsudeve bhagavati  
sarva-jñe pratyag-ātmani*

*pareṇa bhakti-bhāvena  
labdhātmā mukta-bandhanaḥ*

“He thus became liberated from conditioned life and became self-situated in transcendental devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, the omniscient Supersoul within everyone.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.24.45]

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
hanta te kathayiṣyāmi  
divyā hy ātma-vibhūṭayaḥ  
prādhānyataḥ kuru-śreṣṭha  
nāsty anto vistarasya me*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “Yes, I will tell you of My splendid manifestations, but only of those which are prominent, O Arjuna, for My opulence is limitless.” [Bhagavad-gītā 10.19]

### Sūtra 1.2.23

*rūpopanyāsāc ca*

*rūpa*—of a form; *upanyāsāt*—because of the mention; *ca*—also.

**And also because there is mention of a form.**

Because the form of the *akṣara* is described in this way as the original cause of all causes, the form of the *akṣara* here must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It cannot be either *pradhāna* or *jīva*. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.1.3] says:

*yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam  
kārtāram īśam puruṣam brahma-yonim  
tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya  
nirañjanaḥ paramam samyam upaiti*

“One who sees the golden-colored Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Lord, the supreme actor, who is the source of the Supreme Brahman, becomes free from the reactions to past pious and sinful deeds, and becomes liberated, attaining the same transcendental platform as the Lord.”

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ  
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
anādir ādir govindaḥ  
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“Kṛṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes.” [Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1]

### Sūtra 1.2.24

*prakaraṇāt*

*prakaraṇāt*—because of the context.

**[The *akṣara* here must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because of the context.**

The meaning of this *Sūtra* is clear. The *smṛti-śāstra* also confirms that this text refers to Lord Viṣṇu. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* [6.5.65-70] says:

*dve vidye veditavye iti cātharvaṇī śrutih  
parayā tv akṣara-prāptih rñ-vedādi-mayī aparā  
yat tad avyaktam ajarammacintyam ajam avyayam  
anirdeśyam arūpaṁ ca pānīpādādy-asāṇyutam  
vibhuṁ sarva-gataṁ nityaṁ bhūta-yonim akāraṇam  
vyāpya-vyāpyaṁ yataḥ sarvaṁ tad vai paśyanti sūrayaḥ  
tad brahma paramaṁ dhāma tad dhyeyaṁ mokṣa-kāṅkṣiṇām  
śruti-vākyapditam sūkṣmaṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam  
tad eva bhagavad-vācyaṁ svarūpaṁ paramātmanaḥ  
vācako bhagavac-chabdas tasyādyasyākṣarātmanaḥ  
evaṁ nigaditārthasya sa-tattvaṁ tasya tattvataḥ  
jñāyate yena taj-jñānaṁ param anyat trayīmayam*

“The *Athārva Veda* says there are two kinds of knowledge: superior and inferior. Superior knowledge is that which brings one to the eternal, and inferior knowledge is the teaching of the *Rg Veda* and the other *Vedas*. The eternal is unmanifested, without decay, inconceivable, unborn, unchanging, without material form, without material hands or feet, all-powerful, all-pervading, eternal, the source of all living entities, causeless, present within everything, untouched by anything, and the source from which everything has come. Saintly persons see Him. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the supreme abode. He is the object of meditation for they who yearn for liberation. He is described in the words of the *Vedas*. He is supremely subtle. He is Lord Viṣṇu. He is known as Bhagavān [the Supreme Personality of Godhead]. He is the Supreme Lord who has a transcendental form. He is Bhagavān. He is eternal. One who knows these truths knows the truth. He knows the real truth. The inferior truth of the three *Vedas* is something else.”

As discussed in the first Pāda, the *Vedas* recommend various pious ritualistic activities, such as sacrifices to the demigods, as a prerequisite to actual self-realization. This is called inferior knowledge because it is within the scope of the three modes of material nature. Superior knowledge means direct knowledge of the Supreme personality of Godhead, and devotional service to Him. When one attains superior knowledge, he automatically gives up inferior knowledge. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, a great devotee and *ācārya* in the line of devotional service, says:

*sandhyā-vandana bhadram astu bhavato bhoḥ snāna tubhyaṁ namo  
bho devāḥ pitaraś ca tarpaṇa-vidhau nāhaṁ kṣamaḥ kṣamyatām  
yatra kvāpi niśadya yādava-kulottaṁsasya kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ  
smāraṁ smāram aghaṁ harāmi tad alaṁ manye kim anyena me*

“O my prayers three times a day, all glory to you. O bathing, I offer my obeisances unto you. O demigods! O forefathers! Please excuse me for my inability to offer you my respects. Now wherever I sit, I can remember the great descendant of the Yadu dynasty [Kṛṣṇa], the enemy of Kaṁsa, and thereby I can free myself from all sinful bondage. I think this is sufficient for me.”

Thus once a person understands that the actual aim of Vedic wisdom is devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he automatically gives up the ritualistic activities and philosophical speculation of lower stages of knowledge. This is confirmed by the Lord Himself:

*traī-guṇya-viṣayā vedā  
nistrai-guṇyo bhavāṛjuna  
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho  
niryoga-kṣema ātmavān*

“The *Vedas* deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature. O Arjuna, become transcendental to these three modes. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the Supreme Self [ātmā].” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.45]

## **Adhikaraṇa 7: "Vaiśvānara" is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viṣaya* [thesis or statement]: In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.11.1-24.5] we read as follows:

Prācīnaśāla the son of Upamanyu, Satyayajña the son of Pulusa, Indradyumna the son of Bhallava, Jana the son of Śarkarākṣa and Buḍila son of Aśvatarśva, these five great sacrificers and scholars once met together and held a discussion, asking “Who is our Self, the Lord to be worshiped, and what is Brahman?”

They concluded, “Uddālaka the son of Aruṇa at present knows best this ātmā called Vaiśvānara. Let us go to him.” So they went to him.

But Uddālaka considered, “These great sacrificers and scholars will put questions to me and I will not be able to answer them all; therefore let me recommend another teacher to them.”

He said to them, “Dear Sirs, Aśvapati, King of Kekaya, at present best knows this ātmā called Vaiśvanara. Let us go to him.” So they went to him.

When they arrived, the king caused proper honors to be paid to each of them separately. Then in the morning after leaving his bed, he said to them, “What makes you come here? Are you troubled by bad men? But there are no such people in this land. In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no irreligious or illiterate person, no adulterer, much less an adulteress. But if you have come to get wealth, then stay for I am going to perform a sacrifice, Sirs; and I shall give you as much wealth as I shall give to each of the Ṛtvik priests. So stay here, please.”

They replied, “May Your Honor tell us through what means a man may attain liberation. You know at present the Supreme Person Vaiśvānara. Please tell us about Him.”

He said to them, “I shall give you an answer tomorrow.” They went to him again the next morning with sacrificial fuel in their hands, and without ceremony, Aśvapati said this to them:

“Aupamanyava! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Dyū [heaven] only, O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Sutejas [the Supreme Light]. Therefore in your house there are sons, grandsons and great-grandsons. Therefore you eat well and are healthy and prosperous, with many opulent possessions. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Dyū is only the head of the Lord, so your head would have fallen [you would have been defeated in a discussion] if you had not come to me.”

Then he said to Satyayajña Paulusi, “O eternally elect! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Āditya [the Lord in the sun and attracting all], O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Viśvarūpa, the all-seeing. Therefore in your house is seen much and many different kind of wealth. There are chariots yoked with pairs of mules, slaves and jewels. You are, therefore, healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic



glory resides in his house. That Āditya, however, is but the eye of the Lord. You would have become blind if you had not come to see me.”

Then he said to Indradyumna Bhāllaveya, “O Vaiyāghrapadya! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Vāyu, the Lord in Vāyu called knowledge-life, O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Pṛthagvartma [the unusual, the mysterious]. Therefore offers come to you in an unusual way, and rows of chariots follow you. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Vāyu is but the breath of the Lord, therefore your breath would have left you, if you had not come to see me.”

Then he said to Jana, “O Śārkarākṣya! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Ākāśa [the All-effulgent], O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Bahula [abundant]. Therefore you are full of offspring and wealth. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Bahula is only the trunk of the Lord. Your trunk would have perished if had not come to me.”

Then he said to Buḍila Aśvataraśvi, “O Vaiyāghrapadya! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Apas [the All-pervading Lord], O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Rāyi [giver of delight]. Therefore you are wealthy and flourishing. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Rāyi is only the loins of the Lord. Your loins would have broken if had not come to me.”

Then he said to Uddālaka Āruni, “O Gautama! Under what name do you worship the Lord Vaiśvānara?” He replied, “As Pṛthivī [the support of the earth], O holy King.” Aśvapati said, “The Lord Vaiśvānara that you worship is called Pratiṣṭhā [the firm foundation]. Therefore you stand firm with offspring and cattle. Therefore you are healthy and prosperous. Whoever worships Lord Vaiśvānara becomes healthy and prosperous, and Vedic glory resides in his house. But this Pratiṣṭhā is only the feet of the Lord. Your feet would have given way if had not come to me.”

Then he said to all six of them, “Now you, knowing this Lord Vaiśvānara as many, eat your food [get a small reward]. But he who worships this Lord Vaiśvānara as the size of the heart and at the same time limitless, eats food in all worlds, in all beings, and in all selves. Certainly the head of the Lord Vaiśvānara is the good energy of thought, His eye is all-seeing, His breath is all-moving, His trunk is the space containing all, His loins are the giver of all enjoyment, and His feet are the earth, His chest is the altar, His hairs are the grass, His heart is the Gārhapatya fire, His mind is the Anvāhārya fire, and His mouth is the Ahavanīya fire.

“At the time of eating, the first morsel that is taken should be considered as a *homa* offering. The first oblation should be offered with the *mantra Prāṇāya svāhā*. Then the Lord as *prāṇa* is satisfied. When *prāṇa* is satisfied, then the eye is satisfied; when the eye is satisfied, then the sun is satisfied; when the sun is satisfied, then the consort of Vāyu is satisfied, the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The Dyau [consort of Vāyu] and sun rule the Eastern gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“Then when he offers the second oblation, let him offer it with the *mantra Vyānāya svāhā*. Then Lord as *Vyāna* is satisfied. When the *vyāna* is satisfied, then the ear is satisfied; when the ear is satisfied, then the moon is satisfied; when the moon is satisfied, then the consort of Vāyu [Dīś]

is satisfied; when the consort of Vāyu is satisfied, then the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The Diś consort of Vāyu and the moon rule the Southern gate;. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets magnanimity, bliss and Vedic splendor.

“Then when he offers the third oblation, let him offer it saying *apanāya svāhā*. Then the Lord as *apāna* is satisfied. When the *apāna* is satisfied, then the speech is satisfied; when speech is satisfied, then fire is satisfied; when fire is satisfied, then Pṛthivī is satisfied; when Pṛthivī is satisfied, then the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The Pṛthivī and fire rule the Western gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“Then when he offers the fourth oblation, let him offer it saying *samānāya svāhā*. Then the Lord as *samāna* is satisfied. When the *samāna* is satisfied, then the mind is satisfied; when the mind is satisfied, then Indra is satisfied; when Indra is satisfied, then the consort of Vāyu Vidyut is satisfied; when Vidyut or Vāyu is satisfied, then the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. The consort of Vāyu Vidyut and Indra rule the Northern gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“Then when he offers the fifth oblation, let him offer it saying *Udānāya svāhā*. Then the *udāna* is satisfied. When the *udāna* is satisfied, then Vāyu is satisfied; when Vāyu is satisfied, then Ākāśa is satisfied, and the Lord of wisdom and bliss is satisfied. Vāyu and Ākāśa rule the central or upper gate. When the Lord is satisfied then the satisfaction of the sacrificer, along with his family and cattle, follows, and he gets health, energy and intellectual splendor.

“He who offers an Agnihotra without knowing this Lord Vaiśvānara is like someone who removes the live coals and offers libations on dead ashes.

“But he who offers an Agnihotra knowing that Lord, in fact offers oblations to all the souls animating all the bodies on all the worlds.

“As the tuft of the Iṣhikā reed is quickly reduced to ashes upon entering the fire, thus indeed are all the sins burnt of one who, knowing the Lord, offers an Agnihotra.

“Therefore, even if such a knower of the Lord gives the remnants of his food to a *caṇḍala*, it would be offered to the Vaiśvānara Self of that *caṇḍala*.

“The following *śloka* is actually on this subject: ‘As in this world the hungry infants cluster around their mother, so do all beings have recourse to Agnihotra.’”

The Vedic scriptures sometimes describe the Lord indirectly, in terms of His energies. The Lord explains to Arjuna,

*puruṣaś cādhidaivatam  
adhiyajño 'ham evātra  
dehe deha-bhṛtām vara*

“The universe is the cosmic form of the Supreme Lord, and I am that Lord expanded as the Supersoul, dwelling in the heart of every embodied being.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.4]

This universal form is further explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [2.1.33]:

*nadyo 'sya nāḍyo 'tha tanū-ruhāṇi  
mahī-ruhā viśva-tanor nṛpendra*

*ananta-vīryaḥ śvasitaṁ mātariśvā  
gatiṁ vayah karma guṇa-pravāhaḥ*

“O King, the rivers are the veins of the gigantic body, the trees are the hairs of His body, and the omnipotent air is His breath. The passing ages are His movements, and His activities are the reactions of the three modes of material nature.”

It is proper to explain the Lord in terms of His energies, because in one sense, everything is simply a transformation of His potency. Also, this description of the Lord as His energies gives conditioned living entities a chance to perceive Him in the ordinary material elements.

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya  
prabhāsmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ*

“O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon.”  
[*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.8]

The idea is that when the conditioned living entities become accustomed to seeing Him expanded as the material elements, gradually they will develop a sense of God-consciousness, and attain to the higher platform of devotional service to the Lord.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.11.1] says:

*ko nu ātmā kiṁ brahmeti*

“Who is the *ātmā*? Who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead?”

*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.11.6] says:

*ātmānam evaṁ vaiśvānaram sampraty adhyeṣi tam eva no bruhi*

“You know about Vaiśvānara. Please describe Him.”

*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.18.1] states:

*yas tv enam evaṁ prādeśa-mātram abhivimānam ātmānam vaiśvānaram upāste sa sarveṣu  
lokeṣu sarveṣu bhūteṣu sarveṣu ātmasu annam atti*

“One who meditates on Vaiśvānara, who is the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger, and who is present in all worlds, in all elements, and in all hearts, eats food and is nourished.”

and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [5.18.2] continues:

*etasya ha vā etasyātmāno vaiśvānarasya mūrdhaiva su-tejās cakṣur viśvarūpaḥ prāṇaḥ pṛthag-  
vartmā sandeho bahulo vastir eva yayiḥ pṛthivy eva pādāv ura eva vedir lomānir bahir  
hṛdayam gārhapatyō mano 'nvāhāryapacana āśyam āhvanīyaḥ*

“Heaven is the head of Vaiśvānara, the sun is His eye, the wind is His breath, the sky is His body, the oceans are His bladder, the earth is His feet, the sacrificial arena is His chest, the sacrificial grass is His head, the *gārhapatyā* fire is His heart, the *anvāhāryapacana* fire is His mind, and the *āhavanīya* fire is His mouth.”

Is the Vaiśvānara the fire of digestion, the demigod Agni, the fire element, or Lord Viṣṇu?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The word *vaiśvānara* is commonly used in all these four meanings, so its meaning in this passage is unclear.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

## Sūtra 1.2.25

*vaiśvānaraḥ sādharāṇa-śabda-viśeṣāt*

*vaiśvānaraḥ*—Vaiśvānara; *sādharāṇa*—common; *śabda*—word; *viśeṣāt*—because of the distinction.

**The ambiguous word *vaiśvānara* [in this passage of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because the qualities described here [are appropriate for the Lord].**

The word *vaiśvānara* here refers to Lord Viṣṇu. Why? The *Sūtra* says *sādharāṇa-śabda-viśeṣāt*: “Because the qualities described here are appropriate for the Lord.” This is the meaning: Even though the word *vaiśvānara* has many meanings, here it must mean Lord Viṣṇu. The description beginning with the phrase “Heaven is His head” clearly show that *vaiśvānara* here means Lord Viṣṇu.

*śīrṣṇo 'sya dyaur dharā padbhyām  
kham nābher udapadyata*

“Thereafter, from the head of the gigantic form, the heavenly planets were manifested, and from His legs the earthly planets and from His abdomen the sky separately manifested themselves.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.6.27]

Also, the words *ātmā* and *brahma* generally refer to Lord Viṣṇu. The result one obtains by knowing *vaiśvānara* is the same as the result of knowing Lord Viṣṇu. The scriptures say *yatheṣikā tulam*: “As reeds are burned by fire, so are sins burned into nothing by Vaiśvānara.” This clearly shows that Vaiśvānara here is Lord Viṣṇu, for only Lord Viṣṇu has the power to negate sins. The word *vaiśvānara* is composed of the two words—*viśva* [all] and *nara* [human beings]—thus it means “He who is the resting place of all human beings.” For all these reasons, the word *vaiśvānara* here must indicate Lord Viṣṇu.

*tasmai namo bhagavate puruṣāya bhūmne  
viśvāya viśva-gurave para-daivatāya*

“I offer my humble obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the all-pervading and all-inclusive form of the universe, as well as its spiritual master.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 12.8.47]

Furthermore, he says:

## Sūtra 1.2.26

*smāyamāṇam anumānam syād iti*

*smāyamāṇam*—described in the *smṛti-śāstra*; *anumānam*—inference; *syād*—is; *iti*—thus.

**This may also be inferred from the statements of the *smṛti-śāstra*.**

The word *iti* here means “this is the reason.” In *Bhagavad-gītā* [15.14], Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*aham vaiśvānaro bhūtvā  
prāṇinām deham āśritaḥ*

“I am the *vaiśvānara* in the bodies of all living entities.”

In these words the *smṛti-śāstra* affirms that the Vaiśvānara is Lord Viṣṇu. From this statement it may also be understood that the *vaiśvānara* in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is also Lord Viṣṇu.

Now he refutes the idea that *vaiśvānara* refers to the fire of digestion.

### Sūtra 1.2.27

*śabdādibhyo 'ntaḥ pratiṣṭhānāc ca neti cen na tathā dṛṣṭy-upadeśād asambhavāt puruṣa-vidham api cainam adhīyate*

*śabda*—the words; *ādibhyaḥ*—beginning with; *antaḥ*—within; *pratiṣṭhānāt*—because of abiding; *ca*—and; *na*—not; *iti*—thus; *cet*—if; *na*—not; *tathā*—thus; *dṛṣṭi*—sight; *upadeśāt*—from the teaching; *asambhavāt*—because of being impossible; *puruṣa*—a person; *vidham*—the nature; *api*—also; *ca*—and; *enam*—Him; *adhīyate*—is read.

**If [it is said the *vaiśvānara* here] cannot [be Lord Viṣṇu] because many words here refute this idea and because [the *vaiśvānara* is said here] to reside in the heart, [then I say] no because the teaching [of the scriptures is that one should] meditate [on Lord Viṣṇu in the heart] in this way, because it is not possible [to interpret the word here to mean anything else], and because [the text here describes the *vaiśvānara*] as a person with a human-like form.**

The objection may be raised: “The *vaiśvānara* here cannot be Lord Viṣṇu. The text says *āyam agnir vaiśvānaraḥ*: ‘This is the *vaiśvānara* fire.’ Because these words prove that *vaiśvānara* here means fire, the passage *hṛdayaṁ gārhapatyō mano 'nvāhāryapacana āsyam āhvanīyaḥ*—‘The *gārhapatya* fire is His heart, the *anvāhāryapacana* fire is His mind, and the *āhvanīya* fire is His mouth’—presents the *vaiśvānara* as a group of three fires. The *vaiśvānara* is fire, and not Lord Viṣṇu, because *vaiśvānara* is said to be the resting place of *prāṇa* [breath] and again because the *Vedas* say *vaiśvānara* stays within the heart of the living entity.”

Here the *Sūtra* answers this objection by saying *cen na*, which means “If it is said that the *vaiśvānara* is fire, then I say no.” Why? The *Sūtra* says *tathā dṛṣṭy-upadeśād asambhavāt puruṣa-vidham api cainam adhīyate*: “Because the teaching of the scriptures is that one should meditate on Lord Viṣṇu in the heart in this way, because it is not possible to interpret the word here to mean anything else, and because the text here describes the *vaiśvānara* as a person with a human-like form.” *Tathā* here means “by considering to be the fire of digestion,” *dṛṣṭi* means “meditation on Lord Viṣṇu,” and *asambhavāt* means “it is not possible to interpret the word *vaiśvānara* to mean anything but Lord Viṣṇu, because the text of the *Upaniṣad* says that heaven is the head of the *vaiśvānara* and the other parts of the world are other parts of the body of *vaiśvānara*.” Furthermore, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* [10.6.1.11] says

*sa yo hy etam evāgniṁ vaiśvānaraṁ puruṣa-vidham puruṣe 'ntaḥ pratiṣṭitam veda*

“He knows the *agni vaiśvānara*, who has a human-like form and who stays in the hearts of the living entities.”

If the word *vaiśvānara* is interpreted to mean ‘fire,’ then the explanations here that the *vaiśvānara* resides in the hearts of the living entities may be accepted but not the statement that *vaiśvānara* has a human-like form. If *vaiśvānara* is interpreted to mean Lord Viṣṇu, then both statements may be easily accepted.

Next he refutes the idea that *vaiśvānara* means either the demigod Agni or the element fire.

### Sūtra 1.2.28

*ata eva na devatā bhūtaṁ ca*

*ataḥ eva*—therefore; *na*—not; *devatā*—demigod; *bhūtaṁ*—element; *ca*—and;

**For the same reasons *vaiśvānara* is neither the demigod Agni nor the element fire.**

The objector may say: “Because the demigod Agni is very powerful and great, it may indeed be said that heaven is his head and the other parts of the world are parts of his body, and the same may also be said of the fire element. This is so because of the following description of *Ṛg Veda* [10.88.3]:

*yo bhānunā pṛthivī dyām utemām ātatāna rodasī antarīkṣam*

“Agni, in his form of the sun, is spread through the earth, heaven, and everything between.

Even if this be said, still I say no. Why? The *Sūtra* says *ata eva* [therefore], which means “for the reasons already given, *vaiśvānara* is neither the demigod Agni nor the element fire.” The words of this *mantra* of the *Ṛg Veda* are flattery only.

*Avataraṇikā* [corroboration]: In the opinion of Jaimini, the word *agni* may also directly mean “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” just as the word *vaiśvānara* does.

### **Sūtra 1.2.29**

*sākṣād apy avirodham jaiminiḥ*

*sākṣāt*—directly; *api*—also; *avirodham*—without contradiction; *jaiminiḥ*—Jaimini.

**Jaimini is of the opinion that the word *agni* may be interpreted to directly mean “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” and there is no inconsistency in this.**

Just as the word *vaiśvānara*, interpreted to mean either “the leader [*nara*] of the world [*viśva*]” or “the proprietor of all human beings [*nara*] in the universe [*viśva*],” is a Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original cause of all causes, in the same way the word *agni*, interpreted to mean “the leader of all,” is also a name of Lord Viṣṇu. Jaimini Muni considers that there is no contradiction in these interpretations because they are based on the specific meanings of each word’s component parts.

The objector may say: “How can the limitless Supreme Personality of Godhead become the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger, as *vaiśvānara* is said to be in this passage of the *Upaniṣad*?”

To answer this question he says:

### **Sūtra 1.2.30**

*abhivyakter ity āśmarathyaḥ*

*abhivyakteḥ*—because of manifestation; *iti*—thus; *āśmarathyaḥ*—Āśmarathya.

**Āśmarathya is of the opinion that the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in this way [a size the distance between the thumb and forefinger] because He manifests Himself [in the heart of His devotee].**

Lord Viṣṇu appears in this way in the hearts of His devotees, who have the eyes to see Him. This is the opinion of Āśmarathya. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [3.12-13] describes Him as follows:

*mahān prabhur vai puruṣaḥ sattvasyaiṣa pravartakaḥ*

*su-nirmalām imām prāptim īśāno jyotir avyayaḥ*

*aṅguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo 'ntar-ātmā sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ*

*hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikṣpto ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the Puruṣa to initiate the expansion of this cosmos. He is the perfectly pure goal that *yogīs* strive to reach, the effulgent and infallible ultimate controller. Measuring the size of a thumb, the Puruṣa is always present as the Supersoul within the hearts of all living beings. By exercising proper intelligence, one can realize Him within the heart; those who learn this method will gain immortality.”

### Sūtra 1.2.31

*anusmṛter iti bādariḥ*

*anusmṛteḥ*—because of meditation; *iti*—thus; *bādariḥ*—Bādari Muni.

**The Supreme Personality of Godhead is thought to be this small size because that conception is very convenient for meditation. This is the opinion of Bādari.**

Because the Supreme Lord is meditated as residing in the heart, and because the heart itself is the size of the distance between thumb and forefinger, the Lord is thought to be the size of the distance between thumb and forefinger also.

### Sūtra 1.2.32

*sampatter iti jaiminiḥ tathā hi darśayati*

*sampatteḥ*—because of transcendental opulences; *iti*—thus; *jaiminiḥ*—Jaimini; *tathā*—in this way; *hi*—because; *darśayati*—the *śruti-śāstra* declares.

**[The Supreme Personality of Godhead can assume this very small size] because of His transcendental powers and opulences. This is the opinion of Jaimini. [It is known that the Supreme Personality of Godhead assumes this very small size] because *śruti-śāstra* reveals [this information].**

The Supreme Personality of Godhead can become the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger because of His *sampatti*, His transcendental opulence in the form of inconceivable potencies. This action does not limit or restrict the Lord in any way. Jaimini thinks in this way. Why? He says *tathā hi darśayati*: “It is known that the Supreme Personality of Godhead assumes this very small size because *śruti-śāstra* reveals this information.” The word *hi* here means “because.”

The *śruti-śāstra* says *tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham*: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Govinda, who transcendental form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss,” and *eko 'pi san bahudhā yo 'vabhāti* “Although He is one, the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests as many.” In this way the *śruti-śāstra* teaches that many contradictory qualities are simultaneously present in the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His inconceivable potencies. Some of these contradictory qualities are that even though He is Himself all transcendental knowledge, he still has a body; and even though He is one, He is also many. This will be explained in detail later in this book. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is simultaneously all-pervading and of a small size. There is no fault in saying this.

### Sūtra 1.2.33

*āmananti cainam asmin*

*āmananti*—they declare; *ca*—also; *enam*—this; *asmin*—in Him.

**[The *ātharvaṇikas* say this of Him.]**

The *ātharvaṇikas* [students of the *Atharva Veda*] declare that this inconceivable potency is present in the Supreme Lord. In the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* [21] the Lord says *apāṇi-pādo 'ham acintya-śaktiḥ*: “Although I have no hands or feet, I still have inconceivable potencies.” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [3.33.3] says,

*sa eva viśvasya bhavān vidhatte  
guṇa-pravāheṇa vibhakta-vīryaḥ  
sargādy anīho 'vitathābhisandhir  
ātmeśvaro 'tarkya-sahasra-śaktiḥ*

“My dear Lord, although personally You have nothing to do, You have distributed Your energies in the interactions of the material modes of nature, and for that reason the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the cosmic manifestation take place. My dear Lord, You are self-determined and are the Supreme Personality of Godhead for all living entities. For them You created this material manifestation, and although You are one, Your diverse energies can act multifariously. This is inconceivable to us.”

These different opinions do not contradict each other. The *Skanda Purāna* explains:

*vyāsa-citta-sthitākāśād  
avicchinnāni kāṇicit  
anye vyavaharanty etad  
urī-kṛtya grhādivat*

“Other sages take up small portions broken from the vast sky of Vyāsadeva's opinions, just as houses and other enclosures take up a small portion of the vastness of space.”

*Thus ends the Second Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!*



# **Śrī Vedānta-sūtra**

## **Adhyāya 1: The subject matter of all Vedic literatures is Brahman**

### **Pāda 3: Scriptural Texts that may Seem to Describe the Jīva or some other Topic, but in Truth Describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*viśvaṁ bibharti niḥsvaṁ yaḥ  
kāruṇyād eva deva-rāṭ  
mamāsau paramānando  
govindas tanutām ratim*

“I pray that Lord Govinda, the supremely blissful king of the demigods, who mercifully maintains this pathetic material world, may give me pure love for Him.”

This Third Pāda considers some scriptural texts that may seem to describe the *jīva* or some other topic, but actually describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

### **Adhikaraṇa 1: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Abode of Heaven**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The essence of the materialistic mindset is fear: fear of losing control, fear of suffering and ultimately, fear of annihilation. The material existence seems like a vast and dangerous ocean, and to us tiny, weak living entities it seems very possible to become lost like a tiny bubble of foam on its endless waves. Thus we try to set limits on this unruly ocean of life by naming things, by identifying causes and setting boundary conditions. In this way we seek to impose our will upon the vast ocean of existence and establish a sense of identity.

But in reality we are completely helpless, because the ocean of time is unlimited and eternal by nature, and sends wave after wave of change without respite. We are no more able to restrain the waves of time and change than a tiny minnow is able to calm the mighty ocean in which it lives. This existential situation leads to our creating various theories to assuage our anxiety and give us comfort. One of these theories is impersonalism, and another is materialism. They are often found in close relationship, for they share a common atheistic ontological bias.

Materialistic impersonalism says, “There is no God, no intelligence in control of this world; the ultimate cause of everything is actually material nature. Although, being the source of life, material nature is ultimately good, or at least neutral; but because it is mechanical and unintelligent it develops into the wild and disorderly world that we experience, where everyone is on his own, and we, the pinnacle of intelligent life that has developed by chance evolution, must solve the problems of life and death for themselves.” Therefore despite our best efforts to create an illusion of stability by weaving various defective theories with our limited intelligence, inevitably we return again and again to the existential truth that our lives are constantly permeated by a sense of uncertainty and vulnerability.

What we do not see, due to our ignorant self-preoccupation and disregard for the actual laws of the universe, is that actually the creation is very orderly; it is we ourselves who have introduced conflict and danger into the world by desiring and acting independently of God’s plan. This plan, expressed in grand scope and style in the Vedic literatures, is that everyone in the material creation, especially every

intelligent human being, must work toward self-realization by a gradual process of self-purification. The process of purification is based on devotional service to the Supreme Lord, which is given in the *Vedas* by the Lord Himself, and taught by the great souls who become His representative *ācāryas* in disciplic succession from the Lord.

Therefore God certainly exists, is firmly in control of the world and nature, and He has set a limit on the existence and changes of the material world. This limit is the shore of eternity, or the spiritual world, and takes the form of the Lord Himself as the force of time.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*kālo 'smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho lokān*

The Blessed Lord said: “Time I am, destroyer of the worlds, and I have come to engage all people.”

Thus the Lord Himself is the shore of the ocean of time, the limit of the material existence, and the bridge from the dangerous material world, where everything is temporary and changeable, to the spiritual world where we exist eternally along with Him in an unlimited ocean of bliss and perfect knowledge. Pleasing Him by the process of devotional service is the solution for all the ills of material existence. Yet the impersonalists and materialists fight against the plan of the Lord, creating chaos for themselves and others by refusing to follow His clear instructions in the Vedic scriptures. To explain their painful experiences of life and justify their lusty sinful appetites and independent activities, they invent many bogus theories.

The real cause of all our problems is our rebellious attitude against the authority of the Lord, and our lusty attempts to enjoy His material resources by sinful activities like eating meat and indulging in illicit sex, intoxication and speculation. Therefore His servants in this world write many books like *Vedānta-sūtra* to inform people of the real truth, so they can solve the problems of life and return to the eternal blissful atmosphere. A key ingredient of these transcendental literatures is the refutation of the incorrect speculative theories of impersonalism and materialism that keep us immersed in the endless ocean of birth and death in the material world.

The impersonalist speculators’ favorite trick is to throw doubt on the scriptures through imaginative misinterpretations. By attributing false and illogical conclusions to the scriptures, they try to make them seem unauthoritative. Then when the people doubt the scriptures because of their propaganda, they can advance their own absurd theories, based on nothing more than their own defective imaginations. For example, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.5 says:

*yasmin dyauḥ pṛthivī cāntarikṣam*  
*otam manaḥ saha prāṇaiś ca sarvaiḥ*  
*tam evaikam jānatha ātmānam*  
*anyā vāco vimuñcathāmṛtasyaiśa setuḥ*

“Know that He in whom heaven, earth, sky, mind, breath and everything else are woven is the *ātmā*. Give up talking of anything else. He is the shore of the eternal.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Is the abode of heaven described here the *pradhāna*, *jīva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The abode of heaven here is the *pradhāna*, because *pradhāna* is the cause of all material transformations, and also because the words *amṛta-setu* [the shore of the eternal] appropriately describe *pradhāna*, which leads the living entities to liberation just as milk brings nourishment to a calf. The word *ātmā* in this passage may refer to *pradhāna* either because *pradhāna* brings happiness to the living entities, or because it is all-pervading. Then again the words in this

passage may refer to the *jīva*, because the *jīva* is the enjoyer of the things in this world and because the *jīva* possesses the mind and the breath mentioned in this passage.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: This is a typical miscalculation of the materialistic impersonalists. Rather than simply accept the superior wisdom of the *Vedas*, they prefer to employ speculation to conclude that there is no personal God to create the world, but simply an impersonal, mechanical cause behind nature, so they can justify their independent activities by claiming, however tenuously, to be God themselves. Now the author of the *sūtras* sets aside this doubt by speaking the Vedic conclusion.

### Sūtra 1.3.1

*dyu-bhv-ādy-āyatanam sva-śabdāt*

*dyu* – of heaven; *bhū* – and earth; *ādi* – beginning with; *āyatanam* – the abode; *sva* – own; *śabdāt* – because of the word.

**The description “the abode of heaven, earth, and other things,” refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the words in this passage specifically describe Him.**

The words “the abode of heaven” in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.5 refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The *sūtra* says *sva-śabdāt*: “Because the words in this passage specifically describe Him.” The Supreme Personality of Godhead is referred to here because the words *amṛtasya setuḥ*: “The shore of the eternal,” can refer to Him alone, and no one else. *Amṛtasya* means “of the immortal”; and because *setuḥ* comes from the verb *sinoti*, which means “to bind,” the phrase *amṛtasya setuḥ* means “He who enables one to attain the eternal.” Or the word *setuḥ* here may mean “like a bridge.” As a bridge enables one to cross to the other side of rivers and other bodies of water, in the same way the bridge of devotional service to the Supreme Lord enables one to attain the liberation that lies on the other shore of the cycle of repeated birth and death. That is the meaning of this phrase. In this matter the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [3.8 and 6.15] says,

*tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti*

“One can overcome the path of birth and death only by understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

*yadātma-tattvena tu brahma-tattvaṁ*

*dīpopameneha yuktaḥ prapaśyet*

*ajam dhruvaṁ sarva-tattvair viśuddhaṁ*

*jñātvā devaṁ mucyate sarva-pāśaiḥ*

“Without the mercy of the Supreme Lord, there is no alternative for the living entities to get freedom from material bondage. Moreover, in order to receive His mercy, a living entity requires self-realization just as the darkness inside a pot can only be dissipated by a lamp. Similarly, due to our ignorance the Supreme Lord, who is the controller of the entire universe, appears unreal to us. When a living entity realizes himself, he will automatically realize the Supreme Lord. Through knowledge of self-realization a living entity understands that though the Supreme Lord is situated within his heart, He does not take birth like an ordinary living entity. He is aloof from material activities, untouched by nescience, infallible, and supremely pure. Knowing this, the living entity becomes freed from all bondage.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 2.15]

Next he says:

## Sūtra 1.3.2

*muktopasrpya vyapadeśāt*

*mukta* – liberated; *upasrpya* – attaining; *vyapadeśāt* – because of the statement.

**Because it is said [that] the liberated souls attain [this spiritual abode of heaven, earth, and other things].**

That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is attained by the liberated souls is described in the following statement of *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.1.3]:

*yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukma-varṇam  
kārtāram īśam puruṣam brahma-yonim  
tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya  
nirañjanaḥ paramam samyam upaiti*

“One who sees that golden-colored Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Lord, the supreme actor, who is the source of the Supreme Brahman, becomes free from the reactions to past pious and sinful deeds, and becomes liberated, attaining the same transcendental platform as the Lord.”

*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.2.1] says:

*upāsate puruṣam ye hy akāmās te śukram etad ativartanti dhīrāḥ*

“Those sober persons who worship the most pure personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, become free from all material desires and are liberated from the bondage of *māyā*.”

## Sūtra 1.3.3

*nānumānam atac-chabdāt*

*na* – not; *anumānam* – that which is inferred; *atat* – not that; *śabdāt* – because of a word.

**[The “abode of heaven and earth” here is not the *pradhāna*] because there is no word appropriate to it in this passage.**

The *pradhāna* described in the *Smṛti-śāstras* is not referred to in this passage. Why? The *sūtra* says *atac-chabdāt*, which means that none of the words in this passage are appropriate for the insentient *pradhāna*. The abode of heaven, earth, sky, mind, breath and everything else cannot be anything material. Heaven is considered the highest destination for a materially conditioned soul, so what material context can contain it? It is not possible that *pradhāna* is indicated, because the text mentions breath, but *pradhāna* is the non-living composite of all material energy. The principle of life is not material, but the energy of the soul that animates the inert material body. The abode mentioned in the text must be spiritual, because it is attained by liberated souls.

The ultimate abode of everything is the spiritual world, where the Supreme Personality of Godhead engages in beautiful, unlimited pastimes with His eternal associates. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.3] states:

*atha ya eṣa samprasādo ‘smāc charīrāt samutthāya param jyoti-rūpa-sampadya svena  
rūpeṇābhiniṣpadyata eṣa ātmeti hovācāitad amṛtam bhayam etad brahmeti, tasya ha vā etasya  
brahmaṇo nāma satyam iti*

“Then the liberated soul who has achieved the causeless mercy of the Lord leaves his body and attains the supreme effulgent Lord. He is then reinstated in his constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. He then reaches the conclusion that the Lord is the immortal, fearless, and almighty Supreme Soul.”

*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.12] states:

*sa uttamaḥ puruṣaḥ sa tatra paryeti jakṣat krīḍan ramamāṇaḥ. tam vā etaṁ devā ātmānam upāsate*

“The topmost person is he who achieves the Supreme Lord through devotional service. He enjoys food and sports in the abode of the Lord. The demigods worship that Supreme Lord.”

### Sūtra 1.3.4

*prāṇa-bhṛc ca*

*prāṇa-bhṛt* – the *jīva*; *ca* – and.

**For the same reason the *jīva* [is not the “abode of heaven and earth.”]**

The word *na* [not] and the phrase giving the reason [*tac-chabdāt*] should be understood here from the previous *sūtra*. The word *ātmā* in the text under discussion also cannot be understood to be the *jīva* because the word *ātmā*, because it is derived from the verb *atati* [to go], primarily refers to the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the primary meaning of a word is suitable to the context, one cannot take the secondary meaning. The word *sarva-vit* [all-knowing] also cannot refer to the *jīva*. For these reasons, because the words in this passage of the *Upaniṣad* are not appropriate for such an interpretation, he says that the *jīva* cannot be the “abode of heaven and earth” mentioned here.

The *jīva* or spirit soul is atomic in size and insignificant in potency and knowledge. The soul is described as one ten-thousandth part of the upper portion of the hair point in size. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [5.9] confirms this:

*bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya  
śatadhā kalpitasya ca  
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ  
sa cānantyāya kalpate*

“When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul.”

Therefore, the individual particle of spirit soul is a spiritual atom smaller than a material atom, and although there are innumerable *jīvas*, they are not fit to be the abode of anything. Rather, this tiny spiritual spark is the living principle of the material body, and the influence of the spiritual spark is felt all over the body as consciousness; that is the proof of the presence of the soul. Anyone can understand that the material body minus consciousness is a dead body, and that once the soul leaves the body, this consciousness cannot be revived in the body by any material treatment. Therefore, consciousness is not due to any combination of material elements, but to the spirit soul. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.1.9] the measurement of the atomic spirit soul is further explained:

*eṣo 'ṇur ātmā cetasā veditavyo  
yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā samviveśa*

*prāṇaiś cittam sarvām otam prajānām  
yasmin viśuddhe vibhavaty eṣa ātmā*

“The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of subtle air [*prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna* and *udāna*], is situated within the heart, and spreads its influence all over the body of the embodied living entities. When the soul is purified from the contamination of the five kinds of material *prāṇa*, its spiritual influence is exhibited.”

### Sūtra 1.3.5

*bheda-vyapadeśāc ca*

*bheda* – difference; *vyapadeśāt* – because of the description; *ca* – and.

**And also because the difference [between them] is specifically described.**

The *jīva* is not the “abode of heaven and earth” because the scriptures affirm that the *jīva* and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are different, as explained in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [2.2.5]

*tam evaikam jānathātmānam*

“Know Him to be the only Supreme Lord.”

*tam ātmastham ye’ nupaśyanti dhīras-teṣāṁ sukham śāśvataṁ [śānti śāśvatī] netareṣāṁ*

“Only the wise person who can see that Supreme Soul within his heart becomes peaceful and enjoys transcendental bliss.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.12-13]

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā  
samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte  
tayor anyah pippalam svādv atty  
anaśnann anyo ‘bhicākaśīti*

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same *pippala* tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.1-3]

### Sūtra 1.3.6

*prakaraṇāt*

*prakaraṇāt* – because of the context.

**[And also] because of the context.**

The “abode of heaven and earth” here must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead because of the context. The opening statement of this passage under discussion [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.3], asks *yasmin nu vijñāte sarvām idam vijñātam bhavati*: “What is the one thing, knowing which everything becomes known?” Therefore the passage that follows must describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam  
pavitram idam uttamam*

*pratyakṣāvagamam dharmyam  
su-sukham kartum avyayam*

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.2]

### **Sūtra 1.3.7**

*sthiti-adanābhyām ca*

*sthiti* – staying; *adanābhyām* – eating; *ca* – and.

**And also because one is eating and the other standing.**

After describing the “abode of heaven and earth,” the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.1.1] goes on to say:

*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā  
samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte  
tayor anyah pippalam svādy atti  
anaśnann anyo 'bhiśākaśīti*

“Two friendly birds stay on the same tree. One eats the sweet *pippala* fruits and the other, not eating, shines with great splendor.”

If the “abode of heaven and earth” had not been previously mentioned then there would be no reason to assume that the splendid bird here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Otherwise if the “abode of heaven and earth” had not been mentioned, the sudden, unannounced mention of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the allegory of the two birds would not be understandable. The *Upaniṣad* did not need to mention the *jīva*, who is already well known in the world, in the same way. For all these reasons, the “abode of heaven and earth” here refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

### **Adhikaraṇa 2: The Fullness is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The *Upaniṣads* are the essence of the *Vedas*, extracted and compiled by Vyāsadeva to help us learn their most important truths. The common theme of the *Upaniṣads* is that of a student approaching a self-realized spiritual master for instruction and enlightenment. In fact, the very meaning of the word *upaniṣad* is *upa*: “come close [to a self-realized soul],” + *aniṣa*: “sit down [and hear about the Supreme Absolute Truth].” So the *Upaniṣads* collectively teach us to follow the Vedic process of approaching a *guru* and inquiring about the Absolute Truth, Brahman.

Just as the *Upaniṣads* are the essence of the *Vedas*, the *Vedānta-sūtra* is the essence of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* are sometimes deliberately vague and metaphorical, because they are meant to provoke us to inquire about the Absolute Truth from a qualified source. *Vedānta-sūtra* also begins with this process of inquiry about Brahman, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Absolute.” [*Sūtra* 1.1.1] Therefore one should study *Vedānta-sūtra* under the guidance of a self-realized soul, and inquire into the mysteries of the *Upaniṣads* from someone who has experienced them directly. A fully self-realized spiritual master can explain all these mysteries clearly, and offer practical guidance to the student based on his experience.

Upaniṣadic writing is deliberately mysterious to stimulate this inquiry, and also to protect the confidential Vedic truths from unqualified people. But in the absence of a qualified spiritual master, such vague and paradoxical pronouncements can lead to speculation and guesswork. Often, an

unqualified person will pose as a spiritual master and mislead his students with imaginative explanations of the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*. Sometimes such false teachers are sincere, but simply deluded; others are cynical exploiters seeking fame and fortune at the expense of their followers. Either way, accepting a fraudulent teacher is the most dangerous pitfall on the path of spiritual progress.

The conditioned soul is already too much under the influence of the material body and mind. So when a so-called spiritual teacher offers an easy path based on the material body, it seems attractive because the body is something familiar and well-understood. Other false teachers portray the spiritual path as a matter of abstract knowledge alone. They hint at a shortcut to enlightenment based on some tricky mental adjustment. All these prey on the natural tendency of the conditioned soul towards laziness and lack of intellectual integrity.

The actual spiritual path has a number of well-known stages, where the Supreme Absolute Truth is realized in a progressively more subtle series of His energies and aspects, culminating in direct realization of the complete Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. In the passage below, the great teacher Śrī Sanat-kumāra explains this path, beginning with meditation on the Holy Name of the Lord as given in all scriptures. The whole passage [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.1.1-7.26.2] is given here for context:

Nārada approached Śrī Sanat-kumāra saying, “Please teach me, Sir.” Sanat-kumāra replied, “First tell me what you know already, then I will tell you what is beyond that.”

Nārada said, “I know the *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*, the fourth; the *Itihāsa Purāṇa* [*Mahābhārata*], which is a fifth book among the *Vedas*; the science of ancestors, the science of numbers, the science of *devatās*, the science of finding treasure, the undivided original *Veda* and its twenty-four branches, the superhuman *deva* sciences, the science of Brahman, the science of ghosts, the science of politics, the science of the stars, the science of serpents and Gandharvas; all this I know, venerable Sir.

“But Sir, with all this, I am like one who knows the *mantras* only, but not the Lord. I have heard from persons like Your Honor that one who knows the Lord overcomes all grief. I am in grief; therefore, O Sir, take me over this ocean of grief.” Sanat-kumāra replied, “Whatever you have read is verily only the name of the Lord.

“Verily the name of the Lord is the presiding Deity of the *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*, the fourth, and the rest [of the Vedic scriptures]. All these are verily name only; meditate on Brahman in the name.

“He who meditates on Brahman in name gets freedom of movement throughout all that region over which name has her scope; therefore, meditate on Brahman in name.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than name?” “Yes, there is something better than name.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Speech is better than name. Speech makes us understand the *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*, the fourth and the rest. Meditate on Brahman in speech.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than speech?” “Yes, there is something better than speech.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Mind is higher than speech. For name and speech are enclosed in mind, just as when two myrobalan plums or *haritaki* fruits are held in one’s closed fist. When one wishes to study the *mantras*, he does so in mind as Brahman. Meditate on Brahman in mind.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than mind?” “Yes, there is something better than mind.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”



“Will [*mitra*] is better than mind. For when a man wills, then he thinks in his mind, then he utters speech, and sends it forth as a name. In name all *mantras* are included, and all Vedic rituals abide in *mantras*. Therefore all these have their refuge in will; they have will as their Lord, abide in will and so on. Meditate on Brahman in will.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than will?” “Yes, there is something better than will.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Flickering memory [*citta*] is verily greater than will. For when a man recollects, then he thinks in his mind, then he utters speech, and sends it forth in a name. In name all *mantras* are included, and all Vedic rituals abide in *mantras*. All these, beginning with mind and ending in sacrifice, have memory as their center, have memory as their Lord and are supported in memory. Meditate on Brahman in memory.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than memory?” “Yes, there is something better than memory.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Meditation [*dhyāna*] is better than memory. The earth is in meditation, as it were; and also the sky, the intermediate region, heaven, the water, the mountains and divine men. Meditate on Brahman in *dhyāna*. Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than meditation?” “Yes, there is something better than meditation.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Understanding is better than meditation. Through understanding, one understands the *Rg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, the *Sāma Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*, the fourth and the rest, food and its tastes, this world and that world; all this we understand through understanding. Meditate on Brahman in understanding. Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than understanding?” “Yes, there is something better than understanding.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Spiritual power is verily better than understanding. Here is this world, one man of spiritual power makes a hundred men of understanding tremble. If a man is spiritually powerful, he rises to higher planes; rising to higher planes, he serves the Masters; serving the Masters, he attracts their attention; attracting their attention, he gets their audience and their teachings; then he ponders over their teachings and begins to understand them and act on them; thus he becomes wise. By power, the earth stands firm; by power the intermediate world stands firm; by power the *deva-loka* stands firm; by power the mountains and divine men, the cattle and birds and herbs and beasts down to the worms, insects and ants stand firm; by power the world stands firm. Meditate on Brahman in power.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than power?” “Yes, there is something better than power.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Food [*Aniruddha* or spiritual love] is better than spiritual power. Meditate on Brahman in spiritual love.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than spiritual love?” “Yes, there is something better than spiritual love.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Water [*prāṇa* or spiritual peace] is better than spiritual love. Therefore, if seasonal rain were not to fall, all beings become wretched from lack of food; while if seasonal rains fall, all living beings rejoice, for there will be plenty of food. Therefore meditate on Brahman in water.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than water?” “Yes, there is something better than water.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Fire [*Indra* or the fire of genius] is better than water. Therefore when heat pervades the atmosphere, people say ‘It is warm and sultry, it will rain.’ Meditate on Brahman in fire.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than fire?” “Yes, there is something better than fire.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Ether [Umā or the steady light of genius] is higher than fire. Meditate on Brahman in ether.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than ether?” “Yes, there is something better than ether.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Memory [Rudra or spiritual omniscience] is higher than ether. Meditate on Brahman in memory.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than memory?” “Yes, there is something better than memory.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“Hope [Sarasvatī or the bliss of divine vision] is better than memory. Kindled by hope, memory reads the sacred hymns, performs sacrifices, desires sons and cattle, desires this world and that world. Meditate on Brahman in hope.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than hope?” “Yes, there is something better than hope.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“The chief breath of life [*prāṇa*] is better than hope. As the spokes of a wheel are all attached to the hub, so all are attached to this *prāṇa*. But the chief breath himself moves through the Supreme Breath. This Supreme Breath gives to the Chief Breath all that he desires, when the *prāṇa* mediates between the soul and the Supreme; yea, gives to him his very life. This Supreme Breath is verily the father; the Supreme Breath is the sister; the Supreme Breath is the teacher; the Supreme Breath is the priest.

“The Supreme Breath verily exists in all these. He who sees it thus, perceives it thus, knows it thus, becomes the teacher of the highest truth [*ativādin*]. If the people say to him, “You are an *ativādin*,” let him say “I am an *ativādin*.” He need not conceal it.” Nārada inquired, “Is there something better than *prāṇa*?” “Yes, there is something better than *prāṇa*.” “Sir, please tell it to me.”

“The Lord called the Absolute Truth is higher than *prāṇa*. But he in reality is a higher *ativādin* who declares the Lord Viṣṇu to be the Absolute Truth.” “Sir, may I become an *ativādin* by the grace of the Absolute Truth?” “Yes, but first we must desire to know the Absolute Truth.” “Sir, I desire to know the Absolute Truth.”

“When one understands the Lord as omniscient, then one declares the Lord good [*satyam*]. One who does not understand Him as omniscient cannot declare Him good. Only he who understands the omniscience of the Lord can declare Him good. This omniscience, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the omniscient Lord.”

“When one realizes Him as the Thinker, then one understands Him as omniscient. One who does not so realize cannot understand Him as omniscient. This Thinker, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the Thinker.”

“When one known Him as the All-holy, then one understands Him as the Thinker. One who does not know Him as the All-holy, cannot understand Him as the Thinker. This All-holy, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the All-holy.”

“When one knows Him as firm, then one believes Him holy. One who has no knowledge of His firmness cannot believe Him to be holy. One who knows Him as firm, believes Him holy. This firm Lord, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to understand the firm one.”

“When one understands Him as the creator, then he can know Him as having firmness. One who has no knowledge of Him as the creator cannot know Him to be firm. One who knows Him as the creator, knows Him as firm. This creator Lord, however, we must desire to know.” “Sir, I desire to know the creator.”

“When one knows Him as pleasure, he knows Him as the creator. One who does not know Him as pleasure does not know Him as the creator. Realizing Him as pleasure alone, one knows Him

as the creator. This pleasure, however, we must desire to understand.” “Sir, I desire to know Him as pleasure.”

“He who is the Lord Nārāyaṇa called the infinity [Bhūmā] is the real pleasure. Without the grace of the infinity [Bhūmā] there is no pleasure for the finite living beings. The Bhūmā alone is happiness. One must therefore inquire into Bhūmā.” “Sir, I desire to know Bhūmā.”

“When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā. When one sees something else, hears something else, and knows something else, he knows that is very small. He who is the Bhūmā, He is verily the Immortal. But what is limited, that is the mortal.” “Sir, in what does this Bhūmā rest?” “In His own glory, or perhaps not even there.

“In this world, cows and horses, elephants and gold, slaves and wives, fields and houses are said to be glorious. But I do not mean this glory,” said Sanat-kumāra, “I mean something different from worldly glory.

“He indeed is below, above, behind, before, right and left; thus He indeed is full. Now the teaching regarding Him called as ‘I’: the ‘I’ is below, the ‘I’ is above, the ‘I’ is behind, the ‘I’ is before, the ‘I’ is to the right and left; thus the ‘I’ is verily the nearest and the full.

“Next follows the teaching regarding Him as the Ātman. The Ātman is below, Ātman is above, Ātman is behind, Ātman is before, Ātman is to the right and left; thus Ātman alone is the nearest and the full. He who sees Him thus, understands Him thus, thinks Him thus, always thinks the Ātman to be the highest; he sports in the Ātman, he unites with the Ātman, has the Ātman for his joy, and comes directly under the rule of the Ātman. For him there is freedom of movement in all the worlds. But those who understand Him differently live in worlds that are perishable, and are under inferior rulers; for them there is no freedom of movement in all the worlds.

“For the realized soul who sees thus, who thinks thus, who understands thus, there is the vision of how the Chief Prāṇa comes out of the Ātman, how the hope comes out of the Ātman, how the steady memory comes out of the Ātman, how the ether comes out of Him, how the fire comes out of Him, how the water comes out of Him, how the appearance and disappearance of the worlds comes out of Him, how the food comes out of Him, how the power comes out of Him, how the understanding comes out of Him, how meditation comes out of Him, how the flickering memory comes out of Him, how the will comes out of Him, how the mind comes out of Him, how the speech comes out of Him, how the name comes out of Him, how the *mantras* of the *Vedas* come out of Him, how the *karmas* come out of Him; verily the realized soul sees how all this universe come out from the Ātman alone.

“There is this verse about it: ‘The liberated soul does not see death, nor illness nor pain. The realized soul sees everything and obtains everything, everywhere. He becomes one, he becomes three, he becomes five, he becomes nine, and it is said he becomes eleven as well, nay he becomes one hundred and eleven, and one thousand and twenty.’

“Right doctrine leads to right thinking. Right thinking leads to firm meditation. When meditation is form, all bondage is loosed completely, through the grace of the Lord.”

Thus the great teacher Sanat-kumāra showed the other side of darkness to the sage Nārada. Sanat-kumāra is called the Great Warrior; yea, he is called the Great Warrior.

In this passage, after describing the Lord’s Holy Names and qualities, Śrī Sanat-kumāra was asked by Śrī Nārada Muni [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.23.1-7.24.1]:

*bhūmā tv eva vijijñāsītavya iti bhūmānam bhagavo vijijñāsa iti. yatra nānyat paśyati nānyac chṛṇoti nānyad vijānāti sa bhūmā. atha yatrānyat paśyaty anyac chṛṇoty anyad vijānāti tad-  
alpam*

“ ‘One should ask about Bhūmā.’ ‘My lord, I wish to know about Bhūmā.’ ‘When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā. When one sees something else, hears something else, and knows something else, he knows that is very small.’ ”

The word *bhūmā* often means “many,” but here it means “the all-pervading fullness.” The text says *yatrānyat paśyati... tad-alpam*: “When one sees something else, he sees that which is very small.” The Bhūmā is contrasted against *alpa* [the small]. The opposite of small is “all-pervading,” not “many.” Therefore Bhūmā here means “the all-pervading fullness,” and indirectly indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental pastimes.

Bhūmā is one of a class of Holy Names of the Lord that is derived from His qualities, such as Brahma [pure consciousness, the cosmic root substance], Caitanya [living force], Ātmā [the soul of the universe], Paramātmā [the Supreme Soul], Jagadīśa [controller of everyone], Virāṭ [the universal form], Vibhu [He who is full of all opulence], Viśvarūpa [whose body is the universe] and Vyāpaka [the all-pervading Lord]. One may get a little light from these names, but it is difficult to realize that the Holy Name of the Lord is identical with the Personality of Godhead through these indirect names. Therefore the impersonalists are fond of these names, because unlike Holy Names such as Kṛṣṇa, Govinda or Viṣṇu, they do not force one to confront the reality that the Supreme is a transcendental personality.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Does Bhūmā here mean *prāṇa* [life-breath or energy], or Lord Viṣṇu?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: In the passage previous to this, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [7.15.1] says *prāṇo vā āśāyā bhūyān*: “*prāṇa* is better than hope.” Because *prāṇa* is the topic immediately preceding Bhūmā, and because no question and answer intervenes between them, therefore *prāṇa* and Bhūmā are the same. Here the word *prāṇa* [life-breath] means the *jīva* soul, who has breath for his companion. It does not mean merely air. Because this passage begins [7.1.3] by describing the *jīva* soul, *tarati śokam ātma-vit*: “He who knows the soul crosses beyond grief,” and ends [7.26.1] by again describing the *jīva* soul as *ātmana evedaṁ sarvam*: “The soul is everything,” therefore the description of Bhūmā situated between these two statements must be a description of the *jīva* soul. When the *Upaniṣad* says [7.25.1] *yatra nānyat paśyati*: “When one attains Him one sees nothing else,” it means, in this interpretation, that when the *jīva* is rapt in deep sleep and his senses are all in the grip of *prāṇa*, he cannot see anything beyond himself. When the *Upaniṣad* says [7.23.1] *yo vai bhūmā tat sukham*: “the Bhūmā is bliss,” it does not contradict the idea that the Bhūmā is the *jīva* here, because the *śruti-śāstra* says *tasyām sukham aham asvāpsam*: “I slept very happily.” In this way it is proved that this passage of the *Upaniṣad* describes the *jīva* soul. All the other portions of this passage are also very favorable to this interpretation of the *jīva*.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: He says:

### Sūtra 1.3.8

*bhūmā samprasādāt adhyupadeśāt*

*bhūmā* – the Bhūmā; *samprasādāt* – than the *jīva*, who is the object of the Lord’s mercy; *adhi* – greater; *upadeśāt* – because of the teaching.

**[The Bhūmā here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because of the scriptural teaching that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the *jīva* soul.**

The Bhūmā here is Lord Viṣṇu and not the *jīva*, who has *prāṇa* [life-breath] as his companion. Why? The *Sūtra* says, *samprasādād adhy upadeśāt*: “Because of the scriptural teaching that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the *jīva* soul.” The Bhūmā is the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the passage here [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.23.1] says in the words *yo vai bhūmā tat sukham*—“The Bhūmā is bliss”—and because the *Sūtra* here says that the Bhūmā is superior to all. Also, Bhūmā indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.3.4, 8.12.3] says:

*eṣa samprasādo 'smāc charīrāt samutthāya...*

“ ‘Now the *jīva* who has attained the mercy of the Lord rises above the gross material body, attains the effulgent spiritual world and in his true spiritual form comes before Ātman.’ Thus he spoke when asked by his pupils. This Ātman or Viṣṇu is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman, and the name of the Brahman is the Absolute Truth, *satyam*.”

“Thus does that liberated *jīva*, after having been released from the body, reach the highest light, and appears in his true spiritual form before the highest Spirit. He moves about there laughing, playing and rejoicing, be it with women, carriages or relatives, never being conscious of persons near him, so great is his ecstasy. As the charioteer is appointed to the chariot, so is the *Prāṇa* appointed in this body.”

Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the *jīva*, who is dependent on the Lord’s mercy, and who has *prāṇa* [life-breath] as his companion.

The meaning is this: After describing names and a host of other things, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [7.15.2] says *sa vā eṣa evaṁ paśyan evaṁ manvāna evaṁ vijānann ati-vādī bhavati*: “He who sees *prāṇa*, meditates on *prāṇa*, and understands *prāṇa* becomes a true knower of things.” Then after saying that the knower of *prāṇa* becomes a true knower of things, the *Upaniṣad* then says [7.16.1] *eṣa tu vā ativadati yaḥ satyenātivadati*: “He who knows the Supreme Personality of Godhead is in reality the true knower of things.” The word *tu* [but] in the passage under discussion ends the discussion of *prāṇa*. Then the greatest *ativādī* [wise man] is described as “he who knows the *satya* [Absolute Truth],” which here means Lord Viṣṇu. In this way the *Upaniṣad* explains that the Bhūmā is both different from and superior to *prāṇa*. Because in this way the Bhūmā is declared to be superior to *prāṇa*, *prāṇa* cannot be identical with the Bhūmā. The Bhūmā is here taught to be superior to the series beginning with name and culminating in *prāṇa*, and therefore it is clearly seen to be different from speech and the other items in this series. In this way Sanat-kumāra teaches that the Bhūmā is superior to *prāṇa*.

The word *satya* is famous as a Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu. The scriptures often use the word *satya* in this way. For example, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.1.2] says *satyaṁ jñānam anantam*—“The unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead is full of transcendental knowledge”—and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [1.1.1] says *satyaṁ paraṁ dhīmahi*: “I meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” And in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.26, the demigods pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa:

*satya-vrataṁ satya-param tri-satyaṁ  
satyasya yoniṁ nihitaṁ ca satye  
satyasya satyaṁ ṛta-satya-netraṁ  
satyātmakaṁ tvāṁ śaraṇaṁ prapannāḥ*

“O Lord, You never deviate from Your vow, which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone. Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation-creation, maintenance and annihilation—You are the Supreme Truth.

Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites. You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore you are known as *antaryāmī*, the inner force. You are equal to everyone, and Your instructions apply for everyone, for all time. You are the beginning of all truth. Therefore, offering our obeisances, we surrender unto You. Kindly give us protection.”

The word *satyena* in the passage under discussion is in the instrumental case, in the sense of “because.” The meaning here is that one becomes a true *ativādī* [wise man] by knowing Satya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The person who meditates on *prāṇa* as an energy of the Supreme is called an *ativādī* [wise man], because he is wise in comparison to those who meditate on the series of objects mentioned previously, beginning with *prāṇa* and culminating in hope. But he who meditates on Lord Viṣṇu directly is superior to the person who meditates on *prāṇa*. Therefore he who meditates on Lord Viṣṇu is the real *ativādī*, the best *ativādī*.

For this reason the student asks [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.16.1] so ‘*ham bhagavaḥ satyenātivadāni*: “My lord, I will become a man wise with knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” The *guru* then answers *satyaṁ tv eva vijijñāsitavyam*: “One must yearn to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” The objection of the *pūrvapakṣa* that “because there are no further questions and answers after the description of the *ativādī* wise with knowledge of *prāṇa*, therefore the subject of *prāṇa* continues into the next sentence,” is invalid. Moreover, the objection that “because there are no questions after the description of *prāṇa*, therefore *prāṇa* is the highest,” is also invalid. In describing the series of inanimate things, beginning with name and culminating in hope, the *guru* did not say that the knower of any of these was an *ativādī* [wise man]. However, when he described *prāṇa* [here meaning the *jīva*] he did say that the knower of *prāṇa* is an *ativādī*. The student then assumes that *prāṇa* is the highest. That is why he asks no further question. However, the *guru* Sanat-kumāra, not accepting *prāṇa* as the highest, proceeds to explain that Lord Viṣṇu is higher than *prāṇa*. The student, now taught that Lord Viṣṇu is the highest, becomes eager to know how to meditate on Him, and asks so ‘*ham bhagavaḥ satyenātivadāni*: “My lord, I will become an *ativādī* wise with knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

The opponent may say, “What is referred to here is the *jīva*, who is the companion of *prāṇa* [life-breath], and who is referred to in the beginning of this passage as *ātmā*.”

The reply is: No. Here the word *ātmā* primarily means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because to interpret the word otherwise would contradict the statement at the beginning of the passage [7.26.1] *ātmanah prāṇah*: “*prāṇa* is manifested from the *ātmā*.” This view of the opponent also contradicts the statement [7.24.1] *yatra nānyat paśyati nānyac chṛṇoti nānyad vijānāti sa bhūmā*: “When one attains Him one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else. That is Bhūmā.” This description of the perception of Bhūmā clearly refutes any idea that the word Bhūmā could mean anything other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The scriptures say *sauṣuptikam sukham alpam*—“The happiness of deep sleep is very slight”—and therefore to say that the word Bhūmā here means “the *jīva* who is soundly sleeping” is simply laughable. For all these reasons, therefore, the Bhūmā described here is Lord Viṣṇu.

## Sūtra 1.3.9

*dharmopapatteś ca*

*dharma* – qualities; *upapatteḥ* – because of the appropriateness; *ca* – and.

**And also because the qualities described here can be ascribed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone.**

The qualities ascribed here to the Bhūmā are suitable only for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, and not for anyone else. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says [7.24.1]:

*yo vai bhūmā tad amṛtam*

“The Bhūmā is the eternal.”

This describes the eternality that is a natural feature of the Supreme. The *Upaniṣad* also says *sa bhagavaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti sve mahimni*: “Where does the Supreme Personality of Godhead stay? He stays in His own glory.” This explains that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not depend on anyone. The scriptures also say *sa evādhastāt*: “The Supreme Person is above, below, in front, behind, to the left and to the right.” This shows that the Lord is the ultimate shelter of everyone and everything.

The scriptures say [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 7.26.1]:

*ātmanaḥ prāṇaḥ*

“The life-force is manifested from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

This shows that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original cause of all causes. These are some of the qualities of the Supreme described in the Vedic literatures. Finally, the word Bhūmā is used to describe Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu in this passage from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.89.57]:

*tāv āha bhūmā parameṣṭhinām prabhur  
beddhāñjalī sa-smitam ūrjayā girā*

“Then, as the two of them stood before Him with joined palms, the almighty Mahā-Viṣṇu, supreme master of all rulers of the universe, smiled and spoke to them in a voice full of solemn authority.”

The Vedic principle of *samanvaya* means that when the meaning of a word is vague, it should be interpreted according to the context. The purpose of all the Vedic scriptures is to reveal the highest truth as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the best process of self-realization as devotional service to Him. Even though the *Vedas* may mention other subjects, that is their ultimate conclusion. Therefore when one encounters an ambiguous term in the Vedic literature, there is never any fault in interpreting it as indicating the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

### ***Adhikaraṇa 3: ‘Akṣara’ Refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead***

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: Here is another passage containing a word that ostensibly means one thing, but that according to context indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.8.6-8] says:

She said, “O Yajñavalkya! That which is above heaven, and below the earth, which is between heaven and earth, which is in the past, present and future, in what is that woven, warp and woof?”

He replied, “O Gārgi, that which is above heaven, and below the earth, which is also between heaven and earth, which is in the past, present and future, that is woven as warp and woof in the *ākāśa* [sky].” “In what then is the sky woven, warp and woof?”

He said, “O Gārgi, the *brāhmaṇas* say it is woven in the imperishable [*akṣara*]. The imperishable is not large, not small, not short, not tall, not red, not liquid, without shadow, without darkness, without air, without ether, without attachment, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without speech, without mind, without activity, without breath, without a door, without measure; having no inside or outside, it devours nothing, and no one devours it.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Is the *akṣara* [eternal] here *pradhāna*, *jīva*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The word *akṣara* here may denote any of the three. The meaning is ambiguous.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

### Sūtra 1.3.10

*akṣaram ambarānta-dhṛteḥ*

*akṣaram* – the eternal; *ambara* – with sky; *anta* – at the end; *dhṛteḥ* – because of being the support.

**[The word] *akṣara* [here refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because the *akṣara* is described as] the resting place of all the elements, beginning with the grossest and culminating in sky.**

The *akṣara* here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Why? The *sūtra* says *amabarānta-dhṛteḥ*: “Because the *akṣara* is described as the resting place of all the elements, beginning with the grossest and culminating in sky.” The *Upaniṣad* says *etasmin khalu akṣare gārgy ākāśa otaś ca protaś ca*: “O Gārgi, the sky is woven, warp and woof, in the eternal.” The word *akṣara* must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because it is here described as the resting place of all the elements, which culminate in sky. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.24.19], Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

*prakṛtir yasyopādānam  
ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ  
sato 'bhivyañjakah kālo  
brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham*

“The material universe is real, having *prakṛti* as its original ingredient and final state. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the resting place of nature, which becomes manifest by the power of time. Thus nature, the almighty Viṣṇu and time are not different from Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.”

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat  
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya  
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ  
sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*

“O conquerer of wealth [Arjuna], there is no Truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.7]

The objection may be raised: “*Akṣara* here may refer to *pradhāna* because *pradhāna* is the origin of all the changes of this world. *Akṣara* may also refer to the *jīva* because the *jīva* is the resting place of all inanimate objects that come within its perception.”



If these objections are raised, he then says:

### Sūtra 1.3.11

*sā ca praśāsanāt*

*sā* – that; *ca* – and; *praśāsanāt* – because of the command.

**Akṣara here must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the text says that everything is supported by His command.**

In the previous *sūtra* the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as the resting place of all the elements, beginning with the grossest and culminating in sky. Why is this? The *sūtra* says *praśāsanāt*: “Because the text says that everything is supported by His command.” The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.8.9] says

*etasya vā akṣarasya praśāsane gārgi dyāvā-prthivī vidhṛte tiṣṭhataḥ. Etasya vā akṣarasya praśāsane gārgi sūryā-candramasau vidhṛtau tiṣṭhataḥ...*

“By the command of the eternal, O Gārgi, heaven and earth are manifest. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgi, the sun and moon are manifest. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgi, the moments, hours, days and nights, bright and dark fortnights, months, seasons and years all become manifest. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgi, some rivers flow to the east from the white mountains, others to the west, or any other quarter. By the command of the eternal, O Gārgi, men praise those who give, the gods follow the sacrificer, the father, the *darvi* offering.”

*yac-caḥsur eṣa savitā sakala-grahāṇām  
rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ  
yasyājñayā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro  
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

“The sun who is the king of all the planets, full of infinite effulgence, the image of the good soul, is as the eye of this world. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, in pursuance of whose order the sun performs his journey mounting the wheel of time.” [*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.52]

*nabho dadāti śvasatām  
padam yan-niyamād adaḥ  
lokaṁ sva-dehaṁ tanute  
mahān saptabhir āvṛtam*

“Subject to the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sky allows outer space to accommodate all the various planets, which hold innumerable living entities. The total universal body expands with its seven coverings under His supreme control.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.43]

Because these words describe the order of the eternal, the eternal should be understood to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Neither the inanimate, unconscious *pradhāna*, nor the conditioned or liberated *jīva* can create everything simply by their command.

### Sūtra 1.3.12

*anya-bhāva-vyāvṛtteś ca*

*anya* – another; *bhāva* – nature; *vyāvṛtteḥ* – because of the exclusion; *ca* – also.

**And also because the text describes certain qualities that specifically exclude any other being.**

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.8.11] says

*tad vā etad akṣaram gārgy adṛṣṭam draṣṭṛ aśrutam śrotr...*

“O Gārgi, this eternal sees, but is unseen. He hears, but is unheard. He is inconceivable but thinking, unknown but knowing. There is nothing that sees but He, nothing that hears but He, nothing that thinks but He, nothing that knows but He. In that imperishable [*akṣara*] O Gārgi, the ether is woven, warp and woof.”

Because these words describe the *akṣara* in terms that cannot be applied to anyone but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *akṣara* must refer to the Supreme Person. The *pradhāna* is inanimate and unconscious and therefore it cannot see. Because the text here says that the *akṣara* sees everything but cannot be seen by anyone, it cannot mean the *jīva*. Similarly, [*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.15] says:

*sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam  
sarvendriya-vivarjitam  
asaktam sarva-bhṛc caiva  
nirguṇam guṇa-bhoktr ca*

“The Supersoul is the original source of all senses, yet He is without senses. He is unattached, although He is the maintainer of all living beings. He transcends the modes of nature, and at the same time He is the master of all the modes of material nature.”

The conditioned souls in the material world want to see the creation as a pleasurable place for their own enjoyment, therefore they concoct so many false theories about the nature of the cosmos. They want to imagine there is no God in control, to remove all impediments to their false proprietorship and enjoyment. They do not understand that a material creation without a spiritual cause is an impossibility; nor do they see the Lord expanded everywhere by His personal expansions and energies. Therefore they are unaware that He is actually the resting place of everything.

*loke vitatam ātmānam  
lokaṁ cātmani santatam  
ubhayaṁ ca mayā vyāptam  
mayi caivobhayaṁ kṛtam*

“In this world of matter, which the conditioned soul accepts as consisting of enjoyable resources, the conditioned soul expands, thinking that he is the enjoyer of the material world. Similarly, the material world expands in the living entity as a source of enjoyment. In this way they both expand, but because they are My energies, they are both pervaded by Me. As the Supreme Lord, I am the cause of these effects, and one should know that both of them rest in Me.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.16.52]

## **Adhikaraṇa 4: The Puruṣa Seen in Satyaloka is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the *Praśna Upaniṣad* [5.2] the following passage is read:

*etad vai satyakāma param cāparam ca brahma yad oṃkāras tasmād vidvān  
etenaivāyatanenaikataram anveti... yaḥ punar etaṁ tri-mātreṇom ity anenaivākṣareṇa paramṁ  
puruṣam abhidhyāyīta sa tejasi sūrye sampanno yathā pādodaras tvacāvinirmucyate evaṁ*

*haiva sa pāpmabhir vinirmuktaḥ sa sāmabhir unnīyate brahmalokaṁ sa etasmāt jīva-ghanāt parāt paraṁ puriṣayaṁ puruṣaṁ vīkṣatet*

Next Saibya Satyakāma asked him “O Master! What world does he conquer by unceasing meditation on *omkāra*, up to his death?”

“O Satyakāma, the syllable *om* is both the superior Brahman and the inferior Brahman. A wise man attains one of these two Brahman through the vehicle of meditation on *omkāra*.

“One who meditates on the syllable *om* up to the level of exoteric realization, after death he is welcomed by the Supreme Self, and attains another human birth on earth. The *devas* of the *R̥g Veda* lead him to a human body. In that birth he is endowed with austerity, celibacy and faith, and realizes the greatness of the fruit of these.

“Next if he meditates on the syllable *om* up to the level of mesoteric realization, after death he is carried up by the mantras of the *Yajur Veda* to the Antarīkṣa or world of the moon. Having enjoyed the vast powers of the moon-world, he returns again.

“But one who meditates on the the eternal *om* up to the level of esoteric realization, meditating on the Supreme Person, will attain the sun-planet [*tejas*]. As a snake sheds its skin so does he become free from all sins. By the hymns of the *Sāma Veda* he is carried to Satyaloka. There he directly sees the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Person residing in the heart. To that effect are the following two verses:

“The three notes [*svara*] become fatal when uttered singly or in couples, or without harmony. But when properly uttered either in high, low or middle pitch, there is no fear to the wise.

“By the *R̥g Veda* one gains this physical world, by the *Yajur Veda* one gains the astral world, by the *Sāman* he gains that which is known only by the wise. The knower of Brahman also reaches that which is peace, imperishable, free from fear and Supreme, by the vehicle of *om* alone.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Is the person seen and meditated on the four-faced demigod Brahmā or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The text here says that the devotee who meditates on *om* of one length attains the world of men, the devotee who meditates on *om* of two lengths attains the world of heaven, and the devotee who meditates on *om* of three lengths attains the world of Brahma. The planet here is the planet of the four-faced demigod Brahmā, and the person seen by one who goes there is the four-faced demigod Brahmā.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

### **Sūtra 1.3.13**

*īkṣati-karma-vyapadeśāt saḥ*

*īkṣati* – of seeing; *karma* – object; *vyapadeśāt* – because of the description; *saḥ* – He.

**The person here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the description of the object of vision here fits the Supreme Person.**

Here the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the *īkṣati-karma*, or object of vision. Why? The *sūtra* says *vyapadeśāt* [because the description of the object of vision here fits the Supreme Person]. This is so because the *Upaniṣad* [5.2.7] describes the qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the following words:

*tam omkāreṇaivāyatanenānveti vidvān yat tac chāntam ajaram amṛtam abhayam param  
parāyaṇam ca*

“By reciting *om* the wise man attains the supremely peaceful, ageless, eternal, fearless Supreme, the ultimate goal of life.”

The conclusion is that, according to the argument of *niṣāda-sthapaty-adhikaraṇa-nyāya*, the word *brahmaloka* here means Viṣṇuloka [the planet of Lord Viṣṇu]. The *mantra omkāra*, also known as *praṇava* actually indicates the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.8:

*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya  
prabhāsmi śāśi-sūryayoh  
praṇavaḥ sarva-vedeṣu  
śabdaḥ khe pauruṣam nṛṣu*

“O son of Kuntī [Arjuna], I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable *om* in the Vedic *mantras*; I am the sound in ether and ability in man.”

There are three stages of chanting *mantras* for self-realization; the exoteric, mesoteric and esoteric stages, called *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, *madhyama-adhikārī* and *uttama-adhikārī*: the neophyte, the intermediate student and the *mahā-bhāgavata*, or the highly advanced devotee. One whose faith is not very strong, who is just beginning, is considered a neophyte devotee. One who is not very expert in argument and logic based on the revealed scriptures, but who has firm faith, is considered a second-class devotee. Such an advanced devotee is very fortunate. One who is expert in understanding the revealed scriptures and in discussing them with transcendental logic, who has firm conviction and deep faith that is not blind, but is based on his own personal experience of self-realization, is considered a topmost devotee in devotional service. He is the most fortunate, for he has personally realized the Absolute Truth.

Typically the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* is eager to engage his materialistic qualifications in the service of the Lord, mistaking such material expertise to be a sign of advanced devotion. But by continuing to serve the Supreme Lord and the devotees engaged in propagating His mission, the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* gradually advances in realization, and comes to the stage of dedicating his activities to helping more advanced Vaiṣṇavas. Even such *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* can help ordinary living entities by their association, since at least the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* have some faith that self-realization is the purpose of human life and that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because of this faith, the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* gradually becomes detached from those who are opposed to the conclusions of the *Vedas* and the purposes of the Lord. As he gradually becomes more and more neglectful of those who hate the supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and becomes more attracted to friendship with other faithful servants of the Lord, the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* approaches the second-class stage, called *madhyama-adhikārī*. In the *madhyama* stage the Vaiṣṇava sees the Lord as the cause of all causes and the chief goal of everyone's loving propensity. He sees the Vaiṣṇavas as his only friends within this morbid world and is eager to bring innocent people within the shelter of Vaiṣṇava society. Also, a *madhyama-adhikārī* avoids associating with the self-proclaimed enemies of God. When his devotional service becomes mature, the devotee advances to the stage of ecstatic love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and attains the vision of the Lord face-to-face by the Lord's mercy. At that time he comes to the stage of *uttama-adhikārī*. Such a perfect self-realized soul is described as follows:

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed  
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ  
bhūtāni bhagavatya ātmany  
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

“A person advanced in devotional service sees within everything the soul of souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he always sees the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes and understands that all things are situated in Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.45]

The progression of devotional service from the neophyte stage to the perfection of self-realization is described in detail in this famous passage from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* [1.4.15-16], the science of devotional service:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā  
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

*athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati  
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

“In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in *bhāva*, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called *prema*, the highest perfectional stage of life.”

### ***Adhikaraṇa 5: The ‘Dahara’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead***

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: The *Vedānta* teaching distinguishes between external religious practices performed for personal spiritual merit, and internal devotional service performed out of transcendental love for the Supreme Brahman. Ritualistic practices performed for self-advancement are good, but they are only preliminary to the actual transcendental life of the inner consciousness of Brahman. One may gain great material facility, elevation to heavenly regions, great knowledge, and even superhuman powers or appointment to the post of a demigod by performance of the ritualistic practices of external religion. But the actual fruit of religion, which only the wise know, is the inner enlightenment of direct consciousness of the Supreme Brahman, by which all doubts are erased, all obstacles vanquished and all desires achieved. This is eternal, whereas the fruit of external ritualistic religious practices is but temporary.

It is stated in the Vedic literature that *hṛdi hy ayam ātmā pratiṣṭhitaḥ*: “Both the *jīvātmā*, the individual soul, and the *Paramātmā*, the Supreme Soul, live together within the heart.” Wherever the Lord is situated, the Lord’s abode, the spiritual sky is also there. So this transcendental sky is also present within the heart of every living entity. As Lord Jesus Christ said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.” When we come to know that transcendental Lord within our hearts, His abode the spiritual sky is also automatically revealed.

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.1.1-6] is heard the following:

*atha yad idam asmin brahma-pure daharam puṇḍarīkam veśma daharo śminn antar ākāśas  
tasmin yad antas tad anveṣṭavyam tad vijijñāsitavyam...*

“In a great city is a small lotus palace. In that palace is a small sky. That sky should be sought. That sky should be asked about.

“And they should say to him, ‘Now with regard to that city of Brahman, and the small lotus palace in it, and the small sky within the heart, what is there that deserves to be sought for, or that is to be understood?’

“Then he should say, ‘As large as this sky is [all space], so large is that sky within the heart. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever there is of the self within this world and whatever is not, all that is contained within it.’

“And if they should say to him, ‘If everything that exists is contained within that city of Brahman, all beings and all desires, whatever can be imagined or desired, then what is left of it when old age reaches it and scatters it, or when it falls to pieces?’

“Then he should say, ‘By the old age of the body, that sky or the Brahman within it do not age; by the death of the body, that ether or the Brahman within it do not die. That Brahman is the true Brahma-city, not the body. All desires are contained within it. It is the Self, free from sin, from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, who desires nothing but His true eternal desires. Now, as here on earth people follow what they are commanded, and depend on the object they are attached to, be it a country or a piece of land;

“ ‘And as here on earth, whatever has been acquired by exertion perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired in the next world by sacrifices and other actions performed on earth. Those who depart from here after having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds.’ ”

*Samśaya* [arisaal of doubt]: What is the small sky here in the lotus of the heart? Is it the element sky, the *jīva*, or Lord Viṣṇu?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Because the word *ākāśa* generally means the element sky, it must also have that same meaning here. Or, because the *jīva* is very small and also the master of the city of the body, it may mean the *jīva*.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion is given in the following *sūtras*.

### **Sūtra 1.3.14**

*dahara uttarebhyaḥ*

*daharaḥ* – the small; *uttarebhyaḥ* – because of the descriptions that follow.

**The small [sky here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead] because of the description given in the remainder of the text.**

The small sky here is Lord Viṣṇu. Why? The *sūtra* says *uttarebhyaḥ*: “Because of the description given in the remainder of the text.” The descriptions used here to describe the small sky, such as “as great as the sky,” “maintaining everything,” and “free from all sin,” cannot be used to describe either the element sky [*ākāśa*] or the *jīva* soul. The “great city” described in this *Upaniṣad* is the body of the devotee. The “lotus” is the heart in the body. The “palace” is the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The “small sky” is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who should be meditated upon and sought after, and who possesses a host of transcendental qualities, including being always free of all sin. The passage should be interpreted in this way. Therefore the small sky here is Lord Viṣṇu.

The city of the body is also described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [4.25.13]:

*sa ekadā himavato  
dakṣiṇeṣv atha sānuṣu  
dadarśa navabhir dvārbhiḥ  
puram lakṣita-lakṣaṇām*

“Once, while wandering in this way, he saw on the southern side of the Himalayas, in a place named Bhārata-varṣa [India], a city that had nine gates all about and was characterized by all auspicious facilities.”

The human body is a city of nine gates: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, the genital and the rectum. When the nine gates are clean and working properly, it is understood that the body is healthy. Good health is prerequisite to the mental concentration that is the basis of meditation and spiritual life. If the health is disturbed, then the mind is disturbed and cannot focus on the Lord. Therefore cleanliness and freedom from sinful activities like meat eating, illicit sex, intoxication and gambling are required to keep the body in a healthy condition so that one may make progressive advancement in spiritual life by meditating on the Lord within the heart.

The *ākāśa* of sky within the heart is the spiritual sky, or abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The quality of *ākāśa* is that it is the medium of sound vibration. Just like the material sky, the spiritual sky is always vibrating with *śabda*, sound. But the sound vibration in the spiritual world is *śabda-brahman*: spiritual sound vibration, beginning with the Holy Name of the Lord and the Vedic hymns. When we come into contact with *śabda-brahman*, then our whole existence is purified and we can think of the Supreme Lord with love. This is the aim and purpose of human life. Our predecessor spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings,

*jīvera kalyāṇa-sādhana-kāma  
jagate āsi 'e madhura nāma  
avidyā-timira-tāpana-rūpe  
hṛd-gagane virāje*

“The Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa descends into the darkness of the material world just to benedict the conditioned souls. The Holy Name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is just like the sun that rises in the clear sky of the heart of the devotees.”

Those who are trying to exploit the material creation of the Lord, either in the name of piety or atheism, cannot understand such brilliant transcendental knowledge. One must become a pure devotee of the Lord, approach Him within the palace of the city of the body and enter the sky of the heart by the transcendental sound vibration of the Holy Name; then one’s knowledge illuminates everything in all directions. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.3] states:

*yasmin vijñāte sarvam evam vijñātam bhavati*

“The devotee of the Lord knows everything material and spiritual in relationship with the Lord.”

Then he says:

### **Sūtra 1.3.15**

*gati-śabdābhyām tathā hi dṛṣṭam liṅgam ca*

*gati* – because of going; *śabdābhyām* – and because of a certain word; *tathā hi* – furthermore; *dṛṣṭam* – seen; *liṅgam* – hinted; *ca* – and.

**[This is so] because of the description of going, because of a certain word, and because it is both directly seen and also hinted at.**

*Enam* [this], which points to the “small sky” within the heart, is the “certain word” mentioned in the *sūtra*, and the description here of the living entities’ going to the spiritual world of Brahman is the “going” mentioned in the *sūtra*. Both *enam* and the going mentioned here show that Lord Viṣṇu is the “small sky.” The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.3.2] says:

*yathā hiranya-nidhiṁ nihitam akṣetrajñā upari  
sañcaranto ‘pi na vidus tathemāḥ sarvāḥ prajā ahar ahar  
gacchantya enam brahmalokaṁ na vidanty anṛtena hi pratyūdhāḥ*

“As people, unaware of what the ground actually holds, walk again and again over buried golden treasure, so do the people of this world day after day go to the spiritual world of Brahman without knowing it.”

Furthermore, in another place the scriptures again describe the living entities’ going to the Supreme in these words:

*satā saumya tadā sampanno bhavati*

“O gentle one, the living entities are again and again in contact with the Supreme.”

The daily journey to contact Brahman occurs during deep sleep, when the living entity unknowingly rests in the arms of Brahman. This is discussed in Adhyāya 3 Pāda 2 of *Vedānta-sūtra*, and it is the “directly seen” mentioned in the *sūtra*. In the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [2.1.17] it is said:

*ya eṣo ‘ntar hṛdaya ākāśas tasmin śete*

“Entering the sky of the heart, the soul sleeps.”

The use of the word *brahmaloka* hints that Lord Viṣṇu is the topic of discussion here. This is the hint mentioned in the *sūtra*. The word *brahmaloka* here cannot refer to the Satyaloka planet because it is not possible for the living entities to go day after day to the Satyaloka planet.

## **Sūtra 1.3.16**

*dhṛteś ca mahimno ‘syāsminn upalabdheḥ*

*dhṛteḥ* – because of maintaining; *ca* – and; *mahimnaḥ* – of the glory; *asya* – of Him; *asmin* – in this; *upalabdheḥ* – because of being stated.

**This is so because of the description of His glory in maintaining all the worlds.**

In the passage beginning with the words *daharo ‘sminn antar ākāśaḥ*: “In that palace is a small sky,” the descriptions “as great as the sky,” “maintaining everything,” and “free from all sin,” and the use of the word *ātmā* clearly, and show that the “small sky” mentioned here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead without need for support from any other passage. The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.22] also says:

*atha ya ātmā sa setur vidhṛtir eṣāṁ lokānām asaṁbhedāya*

“He is the Supreme Person, the bridge, the controller who prevents the worlds from becoming broken and destroyed.”



Because the “small sky” is thus shown to possess the glory of maintaining all the worlds, the “small sky” here must be Lord Viṣṇu. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* also says:

*eṣa setur vidhāraṇa eṣāṁ lokānām asambhedāya*

“He is the bridge, the controller who prevents the worlds from becoming broken and destroyed.”

In these passages and in others also, this glory of the Supreme Personality of Godhead may be understood. The method of entering that transcendental sky by spiritual sound vibration, whose source is given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [12.6.37-41] as the sky of the heart:

*samāhitātmano brahman brahmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ  
hṛdy ākāśād abhūn nādo vṛtti-rodhād vibhāvyate*

Sūta Gosvāmī said: “O *brāhmaṇa*, first the subtle vibration of transcendental sound appeared from the sky of the heart of the most elevated Lord Brahmā, whose mind was perfectly fixed in spiritual realization. One can perceive this subtle vibration when one stops all external hearing.

*yad-upāsanayā brahman yogino malam ātmanaḥ  
dravya-kriyā-kāraṇākhyam dhūtvā yānti apunar-bhavam*

“By worship of this subtle form of the *Vedas*, O *brāhmaṇa*, mystic sages cleanse their hearts of all contamination caused by impurity of substance, activity and doer, and thus they attain freedom from repeated birth and death.

*tato 'bhūt tri-vṛd omkāro yo 'vyakta-prabhavaḥ sva-rāṭ  
yat tal līngaṁ bhagavato brahmaṇaḥ paramātmānaḥ*

“From that transcendental subtle vibration arose the *omkāra* composed of three sounds. The *omkāra* has unseen potencies and manifests automatically within a purified heart. It is the representation of the Absolute Truth in all three of His phases—the Supreme Personality, the Supreme Soul and the supreme impersonal truth.

*śṛṇoti ya imaṁ sphoṭam supta-śrotre ca śūnya-drk  
yena vāg vyajyate yasya vyaktir ākāśa ātmanaḥ*

*sva-dhāmno brāhmaṇaḥ sāksād vācakaḥ paramātmānaḥ  
sa sarva-mantropaniṣad veda-bījaṁ sanātanam*

“This *omkāra*, ultimately nonmaterial and imperceptible, is heard by the Supersoul without His possessing material ears or any other material senses. The entire expanse of Vedic sound is elaborated from *omkāra*, which appears from the Supreme Soul within the sky of the heart. It is the direct designation of the self-originating Absolute Truth, the Supersoul, and is the secret essence and eternal seed of all Vedic hymns.”

### Sūtra 1.3.17

*prasiddheś ca*

*prasiddheḥ* – because of being famous in this way; *ca* – and.

**And also because this is a traditional usage of the word.**

This is so because the word “sky” is commonly used to mean “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” as may be seen in the following statement of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.7.1]:

*ko hy evānyat kaḥ prāṇyāt. yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt, eṣa evānandayati.*

“Who could breathe if the sky were not bliss? Indeed, He alone is the source of all pleasure.”

*viśuddha-sattvasyāntar-hṛdayākāśa-śarīre*

“The *yogīs* who are completely purified meditate on [He who is] the sky in the heart of the body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.7.7]

*anubhavataḥ sarva-pratyaya-sākṣiṇaḥ ākāśa-śarīrasya sākṣāt para-brahmaṇaḥ paramātmānaḥ*

“You are the witness of all different activities, the Self of the universal sky, and directly the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Supersoul.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.9.42]

Someone may raise the following objection: “The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.3.4] says:

*sa eṣa samprasādo ‘smāc charīrāt samutthāya param jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇābhiniṣpadyate. Eṣa ātmeti hovāca. Etad amṛtam etad abhayam etad brahma*

“The liberated *jīva* rises from the material body. He attains the spiritual effulgence and manifests his original form. ‘This is the self,’ he said. ‘He is immortal. He is fearless. He is Brahman.’ ”

Because this description of the *jīva* appears immediately afterward, the description of the small sky should be understood to refer to the *jīva*.”

If this objection is raised, he replies:

### Sūtra 1.3.18

*itara-parāmarṣāt sa iti cen nāsambhavāt*

*itara* – the other; *parāmarṣāt* – because of reference; *saḥ* – he; *iti* – thus; *cet* – if; *na* – not; *asambhavāt* – because of impossibility.

**[If it is said that] because there is mention of something else [the *jīva*] in the same passage [and therefore the “small sky” here is the *jīva*, then I say] no, because it is impossible.**

Although in the middle of this passage there is a description of the *jīva*, nevertheless it is not possible to say that the beginning of this passage describes the *jīva*. Why? The *sūtra* says *asambhavāt*: “Because it is impossible.” This is so because in the beginning of this passage there is a description of eight qualities, beginning with “being free from sin,” that cannot be ascribed to the *jīva*.

A *jīva* falls down into material nescience because of countless sinful activities, and in these alien surroundings he goes up and down, traveling through all the planetary systems, from Lord Brahmā’s planet down to Pātāla-loka. In the material world the *jīva* experiences birth, disease, old age, and death and is forced to accept three types of suffering: *adhyātmika* [from his own self], *adhidaivika* [from the demigods] and *adhibhautika* [from other living entities]. *Bhagavad-gītā* speaks of the living entity is an eternal fragment of the Lord. The atomic fragment of God, the living entity, may fall down into the material world, but the Supreme Lord Acyuta never falls down.

Now our opponent may say: “So be it. Still, after the description of the ‘small sky,’ the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.7.1] says:

*ya ātmāpahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso ‘pipāsaḥ satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ so ‘nveṣṭavyaḥ sa vijijñāsitavyaḥ*

“The soul is free from sin, old age, death, suffering, hunger, and thirst. It desires only the good. Whatever it desires is attained at once.”

Because these words of the Prajāpati describe the *jīva*, the qualities described in 7.7.1, and the ‘small sky’ described before that, may also refer to the *jīva*.”

Considering that this doubt might arise, he says:

### Sūtra 1.3.19

*uttarāc cet āvirbhāva-svarūpas tu*

*uttarāt* – because of a later passage; *cet* – if; *āvirbhāva* – manifestation; *svaṛūpas* – form; *tu* – indeed.

**[If it is said that] a later passage [proves that the “small sky” is the *jīva* then I say no.] The description of the true nature of the *jīva* [is confined to that passage alone.]**

The word *tu* [but] is used here to dispel doubt. The word *na* [no] should be understood from the previous *sūtra*. In this passage spoken by the Prajāpati the teaching is that the *jīva* manifests the eight qualities mentioned in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.7.1] quoted above by engaging in spiritual activities, but otherwise these qualities are not manifested. In the passage describing the “small sky” these eight attributes are said to be eternally manifested. The statement of the Prajāpati is, however, that these qualities are present in the *jīva* only if he engages in spiritual activities. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.3.4] clearly explains the difference between the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses these eight qualities in all circumstances, and the *jīva*, who possesses these qualities only when he becomes liberated, in the following words:

*sa eṣa samprasādo ‘smāc charīrāt samutthāya param jyotir upasampadya svena rūpeṇābhiniṣpadyate. Eṣa ātmeti hovāca. Etad amṛtam etad abhayam etad brahma.*

“The liberated *jīva* rises from the material body. He attains the spiritual effulgence and manifests his original form. This is the self,” he said. “He is immortal. He is fearless. He is Brahman”.

Although the *jīva* may manifest some of these eight qualities by engaging in spiritual activities, he still cannot manifest all of them. The qualities of being the “bridge that spans the worlds,” and being the “maintainer of the worlds” are some of the qualities the *jīva* can never attain. This proves that the “small sky” is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Now our opponent says: “If this is so, then why is the *jīva* mentioned at all in this passage?”

To answer this question he says:

### Sūtra 1.3.20

*anyārthaś ca parāmarṣaḥ*

*anya* – another; *arthaś* – meaning; *ca* – and; *parāmarṣaḥ* – reference.

**The description of the *jīva* here has a different object.**

The *jīva* is described here in order to teach about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the *jīva* becomes liberated and attains his original spiritual form, he also manifests these eight qualities. In this way it may be understood that the “small sky” is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [5.18.12] confirms:

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā  
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ  
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā  
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

“One who has unflinching devotion for the Personality of Godhead has all the good qualities of the demigods. But one who is not a devotee of the Lord has only material qualifications that are of little value. This is because he is hovering on the mental plane and is certain to be attracted by the glaring material energy.”

Now our opponent says: “Because the ‘small sky’ within is described as very small it must refer to the *jīva*, which was previously described as also being very small.”

If this objection is given, then he says:

### Sūtra 1.3.21

*alpa-śruter iti cet tad-uktam*

*alpa* – small; *śruteḥ* – from the *śruti*; *iti* – thus; *cet* – if; *tat* – that; *uktam* – said.

**If it is said that when the *śruti* describes the “small” it must refer to the *jīva*, then I say no because of what has already been said.**

The Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests a very small form to facilitate meditation on Him. This has already been described in *Sūtra* 1.2.7, which says *nicāyyatvād evaṁ vyomavac ca*: “Brahman should be meditated on in this way, and because in the same passage the *manomaya* is said to be as great as the sky.” Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-pervading, in order to facilitate meditation on Him, He manifests a small form the size of the distance between the thumb and forefinger. He appears in this small form so He may be easily meditated upon. Of course, His glories have no limit and His size also has no limit. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [2.2.8] mentions:

*kecit sva-dehāntar-hṛdayāvakāśe  
prādeśa-mātram puruṣam vasantam  
catur-bhujam kañja-rathāṅga-śaṅkha-  
gadā-dharam dhāraṇayā smaranti*

“Others conceive of the Personality of Godhead residing within the body in the region of the heart and measuring only eight inches, with four hands carrying a lotus, a wheel of a chariot, a conchshell and a club respectively.”

Then he gives another explanation.

### Sūtra 1.3.22

*anukṛtes tasya ca*

*anukṛteḥ* – because of imitation; *tasya* – of Him; *ca* – also.

**And also because [the *jīva*] merely resembles [the Supreme Personality of Godhead] in some respects.**

Because, according to the statement of the Prajāpati, the *jīva*, who only manifests the eight qualities when engaged in spiritual activities, merely resembles in some respects the “small sky,” who manifests the eight qualities eternally, the “small sky” must be different from the *jīva*. Previously the original form of the *jīva* is covered by illusion, and then afterwards, by worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the illusion becomes broken and the *jīva*, manifesting these eight qualities, becomes qualitatively similar to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way, as explained by the Prajāpati, the *jīva* resembles, in some respects, the “small sky.” The sentence *pavanam anuharate hanūmān*: “Hanuman resembles the wind,” shows the difference between the resembled object and the thing that resembles it.

That the liberated *jīva* resembles the Supreme Personality of Godhead may also be seen in the following words from *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [3.1.3]: *nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyam upaiti*: “The liberated *jīva* resembles the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* [8.5]:

*anta-kāle ca mām eva  
smaran muktvā kalevaram  
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ  
yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ*

“And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body, remembering Me, attains immediately to My nature; and there is no doubt of this.”

### **Sūtra 1.3.23**

*api smaryate*

*api* – and; *smaryate* – described in the *smṛti-śāstra*.

**This is also described in the *smṛti-śāstra*.**

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [14.2] the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, also explains:

*idaṁ jñānam upāśritya  
mama sādharmaṁ āgataḥ  
sarge 'pi nopajāyante  
pralaye na vyathanti ca*

“By becoming fixed in this knowledge, one can attain to the transcendental nature like My own. Once established, one is not born at the time of creation or disturbed at the time of dissolution.”

In this way the *smṛti-śāstra* explains that the liberated *jīvas* attain a nature like that of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For these reasons the “small sky” is Lord Hari and not the *jīva*.

### **Adhikaraṇa 6: The Person the Size of a Thumb is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [2.1.12-13] the following words are read:

*aṅguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo madhya ātmani tiṣṭhati*  
*īśāno bhūta-bhavyaysya tato na vijugupsate...*

“A person the size of a thumb stands in the heart. He is the master of the past and future. He does not fear. This is that. That person of the size of a thumb is like a light without smoke, Lord of the past and future; He is the same today and tomorrow. This is that.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Is this person the size of a thumb the *jīva* or Lord Viṣṇu?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The person here is the *jīva* because the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [5.7-8] says  
*prāṇādhipaḥ sañcarati sva-karmabhir aṅguṣṭha-mātroravi-tulya-rūpaḥ*

“The ruler of breath moves about, impelled by his *karma*. He is the size of a thumb. He is splendid as the sun.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

### Sūtra 1.3.24

*śabdād eva pramitaḥ*

*śabdāt* – because of the word; *eva* – even; *pramitaḥ* – limited.

**Even though [He is] very small [this person is the Supreme Lord] because of the words [in the text].**

The person here the size of a thumb is Lord Viṣṇu. Why? The *sūtra* says *śabdāt* [because of the words in the text]. The *Upaniṣad* text referred to here is *īśāno bhūta-bhavyaysa*: “He is the master of the past and future.” It is not possible for the *jīva* to possess this power, because he is controlled by his *karma*.

Now it may be asked: “How is it possible for the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead to become limited to this very small form?” To answer this question he says:

### Sūtra 1.3.25

*hṛdy upekṣayā tu manuṣyādhikāratvāt*

*hṛdi* – in the heart; *upekṣayā* – with relation; *tu* – indeed; *manuṣya* – of human beings; *adhikāratvāt* – because of the qualification.

**This is so because the Supreme Personality of Godhead indeed appears in the hearts of men.**

The word *tu* [indeed] is used here for emphasis. The all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the size of a thumb because He is meditated on as being the size of thumb within the heart. Another interpretation is that because He appears, by His inconceivable potency, in such a small form in the heart He is meditated on in that way, as has been already described.

*adhiyajño 'ham evātra dehe deha-bhṛtām vara*

“I, the Supreme Lord, represented as the Supersoul in the heart of every embodied being, am called *adhiyajña* [the Lord of sacrifice].” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.4]

*evam sva-citte svata eva siddha*  
*ātmā priyo 'rtho bhagavān anantaḥ*  
*taṁ nirvṛto niyatārtho bhajeta*  
*saṁsāra-hetūparamaś ca yatra*

“Thus being fixed [in renunciation], one must render service unto the Supersoul situated in one’s own heart by His omnipotency. Because He is the Almighty Personality of Godhead, eternal and unlimited, He is the ultimate goal of life, and by worshiping Him one can end the cause of the conditioned state of existence.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.2.6]

Someone may object, “Because the different species have bodies of different sizes and hearts of different sizes it is not possible that the Lord can appear in all of them in this size.” If this objection is raised, to answer it he says *mānuṣyādhikāratvāt*: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in the hearts of men.” Although the scriptures do not specify any particular species, implying that the Lord appears in the hearts of all living entities, he [Vyāsa] singles out human beings. He does this because it is human beings who are able to meditate and therefore the measurement is given here according to the human body. For this reason there is no contradiction here. In the same way in the hearts of elephants, horses, and all other creatures the Supreme Personality of Godhead appears in a form the size of the thumb of each creature. In this way there is no contradiction.

It is not possible for the *jīva*, however, to be present within the heart in a form the size of a thumb because the original form of the *jīva* is atomic in size, as explained in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [5.9] in the words *bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya*: “When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the *jīva* soul.” For all these reasons, therefore, the person the size of a thumb is Lord Viṣṇu.

## **Adhikaraṇa 7: The Devas Can Meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: Advanced *yogīs* meditate on the Supreme Brahman in the form of the Supreme Lord within the heart, but ordinary people cannot see Him there.

*kumārā ūcuḥ*  
*yo 'ntarhito hṛdi gato 'pi durātmanām tvam*  
*so 'dyaiva no nayana-mūlam ananta rāddhaḥ*

The Kumāras said: “Our dear Lord, You are not manifested to rascals, even though You are seated within everyone’s heart, although You are unlimited. But as far as we are concerned, we see You face-to-face.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.15.46]

In order to prove that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the person the size of a thumb seated in the heart of every living entity, the Vedic scriptures were quoted to establish that human beings who have the right to meditate on the Supreme Person. For example, *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [1.15] states:

*evam ātmātmāni gr̥hyate 'sau satyenainam tapasā yo 'nupaśyati*

“The Supersoul is situated within the core of everyone’s heart. One who searches after that Supreme Lord through meditation and austerity can see Him within his heart.”

*tam ātmastham ye 'nupaśyanti dhīras-teṣām sukham śāśvataṁ [śānti śāśvatī] netareṣām*

“Only the wise person who can see that Supreme Soul within his heart becomes peaceful and enjoys transcendental bliss.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.12-13]

*tam imam aham ajam śarīra-bhājām*  
*hṛdi hṛdi dhiṣṭhitam ātma-kalpitānām*  
*pratidṛśam iva naikadhārkam ekam*  
*samadhi-gato 'smi vidhūta-bheda-mohaḥ*

“Now I can meditate with full concentration upon that one Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, now present before me because now I have transcended the misconceptions of duality in regard to His presence in everyone's heart, even in the hearts of the mental speculators. He is in everyone's heart. The sun may be perceived differently, but the sun is one.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.42]

This evidence may lead to the belief that human beings **alone** have the right to meditate on the Supreme Person. But this is a wrong view. But all men on the path of gradual elevation through *karma-yoga* must pass through the stage of being *devas*. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.7 and 6.2.15] declares:

*yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye 'sya hṛdi śritāḥ  
atha martyo 'mṛto bhavaty atra brahma samaśnute  
te 'rcir abhisambhavanti*

“Those who are free from all material desires, which are diseases of the heart, are able to conquer death and enter the kingdom of God through the Arci [higher heavenly] planets.”

And Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.25], *yānti deva-vratā devān*: “Those who worship the *devas* will take birth among them.” This is the gradual path of elevation to the spiritual world described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [2.2.22-31]. If meditation on Brahman is enjoined only for human beings, then those men who become *devas* will not be able to continue their spiritual path. Thus this idea creates a contradiction. Now, by refuting that false belief, the right of others besides men to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead will be proved.

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [1.4.10] says:

*tad yo yo devānām pratyabudhyata sa eva tad abhavat  
tatharṣiṇām tathā manusyāṇām*

“Whoever among the *devas* meditated on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, attained Supreme Personality of Godhead. Whoever among the sages meditated on Him attained Him. Whoever among the human beings meditated on Him attained Him.”

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.16] also says:

*tad devā jyotiṣām jyotir āyur hopāsate 'mṛtam*

“The *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the splendor of all splendors, and who is eternity and life.”

*amī hi tvām sura-saṅghā viśanti  
kecid bhūtāḥ prāñjalayo gṛṇanti*

“All the hosts of demigods are surrendering before You and entering into You. Some of them, very much afraid, are offering prayers with folded hands.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 11.21]

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Is it possible for the *devas* to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as human beings do, or is it not possible?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Because the *devas* have no senses they are not able to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indra and the other *devas* are simply thought-forms, beings created by *mantras*. They have no bodily senses. Because they have no senses they have no material desires or spiritual renunciation. Hence the *devas* are not capable of meditation on Brahman.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.



## Sūtra 1.3.26

*tad upary api bādarāyaṇaḥ sambhavāt*

*tad* – that; *upari* – above; *api* – also; *bādarāyaṇaḥ* – Vyāsadeva; *sambhavāt* – because of being possible.

**Beings superior [to humankind] also can [meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the opinion] of Vyāsa.**

The *devas* and other beings superior to humankind are able to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the opinion of Lord Vyāsadeva. Why? Because according to the *Upaniṣads*, Vedic *mantras*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and ancient tradition, they do indeed have bodies and senses. While the senses of different kind of bodies may differ in quality, the principle of embodiment is common to all beings, including the demigods.

*kvacit pumān kvacic ca strī  
kvacin nobhayam andha-dhīḥ  
devo manuṣyas tiryag vā  
yathā-karma-guṇaṁ bhavaḥ*

“Covered by the mode of ignorance in material nature, the living entity is sometimes a male, sometimes a female, sometimes a eunuch, sometimes a human being, sometimes a demigod, sometimes a bird, an animal, and so on. In this way he is wandering within the material world. His acceptance of different types of bodies is brought about by his activities under the influence of the modes of nature.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.29.29]

*sarva-bhūteṣu yenaikaṁ  
bhāvam avyayam īkṣate  
avibhaktaṁ vibhakteṣu  
taj jñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikam*

“That knowledge by which one undivided spiritual nature is seen in all living entities, though they are divided into innumerable forms, you should understand to be in the mode of goodness.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.20]

Because the demigods are servants of the Supreme Lord, and have heavenly bodies and senses, they are certainly able to meditate and pray to Him:

*ete devāḥ kalā viṣṇoḥ  
kāla-māyāṁśa-līṅginaḥ  
nānātvāt sva-kriyānīśāḥ  
procuḥ prāñjalayo vibhum*

“The controlling deities of all the above-mentioned physical elements are empowered expansions of Lord Viṣṇu. They are embodied by eternal time under the external energy, and they are His parts and parcels. Because they were entrusted with different functions of universal duties and were unable to perform them, they offered fascinating prayers to the Lord as follows.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.38]

Because the demigods are well aware of the baseness and impermanence of their celestial opulence, the root of the suffering of material existence, they are able to be detached from their opulence and renounce it in the mood of service to the Lord. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* [6.5.50] explains:

*na kevalaṁ dvija-śreṣṭha  
narake duḥkha-paddhatīḥ*

*svarge 'pi yāta-bhītasya  
kṣayaṣṇor nāsti nirvṛtiḥ*

“O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, torment does not exist only in hell. The residents of the heavenly planets, afraid that they may one day fall from heaven, have no happiness.”

For this reason the *devas* desire spiritual happiness. This is so because they have heard from the *śruti-śāstra* that spiritual bliss is limitless, eternal, and pure. The *śruti* explains that the *devas* and other celestial beings observe vows of celibacy to attain spiritual knowledge. This is described in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [5.2.1] in these words:

*tatra yāḥ prajāpatyāḥ prajāpatau pitari brahmacaryam ūṣur devā manuṣyā asurāḥ*

“The *devas*, humans, and *asuras*, who were all sons of Lord Brahmā, lived with their father as celibate students of spiritual knowledge.”

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.11.3] King Indra is described in the following words:

*eka-śataṁ ha vai varṣāṇi maghavā  
prajāpatau brahmacaryam uvāsa*

“King Indra lived as a celibate student of spiritual knowledge [*brahmacārī*] in the home of Lord Brahmā for a hundred years.”

For these reasons, therefore, we must accept that the *devas* and other higher beings are able to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The following objection may be raised: “Your idea, that the *devas* are not beings created by *mantras* but are conditioned living entities residing in material bodies, is not consistent with the activities of the *devas* and other higher beings, because it is not possible that a single embodied demigod could come to many different places at once when called to appear at many *agnihotra-yajñas* in many different places simultaneously.”

If this is said, he [Vyāsa] speaks the following words:

### **Sūtra 1.3.27**

*virodhaḥ karmanīti cen nāneka-pratipatter darśanāt*

*virodhaḥ* – contradiction; *karmaṇi* – in activities; *iti* – thus; *cen* – if; *na* – not; *aneka* – many; *pratipatteḥ* – because of the acceptance; *darśanāt* – because of seeing.

**[If it is objected that this idea] is refuted by the activities of the *devas*, then I say no, because it is seen [that the *devas* have the power to manifest] many [forms simultaneously.]**

There is no contradiction here if it accepted that the *devas* are embodied souls with material bodies. Why? The *Sūtra* says *aneka-pratipatter darśanāt*: “Because it is seen that the *devas* have the power to manifest many forms simultaneously.” This is so because the scriptures describe that many powerful beings, such as Saubhari Muni, Kardama Muni and others, are able to manifest many forms simultaneously.

*vibhajya navadhātmānam  
mānavīm suratotsukām  
rāmām niramayan reme  
varṣa-pūgān muhūrtavat*

“After coming back to his hermitage, Kardama divided himself into nine personalities just to give pleasure to Devahūti, the daughter of Manu, who was eager for sex life. In that way he enjoyed with her for many, many years, which passed just like a moment.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.23.44]

The objector may say: “It may be that there is no contradiction in the description of the *devas*’ activities for those who believe that the *devas* have bodies. There remains, however, a contradiction in the description of the words of the *Vedas*. Before the birth and after the death of each demigod, a period would exist when the name of that demigod would not have any meaning. At that time the words of the *Vedas* would become meaningless, like the statement ‘the son of a barren woman.’ In this way this idea is refuted. The *Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra* says: *autpattikas tu śabdenārthasya sambandhaḥ*: ‘In the *Vedas* the relation between name and the object named is eternal.’ This idea [that the *devas* are embodied souls] would then contradict the eternality of the names in the *Vedas*.”

If this objection is raised, then he [Vyāsa] replies:

### Sūtra 1.3.28

*śabda iti cen nātaḥ prabhavāt pratyakṣānumānābhyām*

*śabdaḥ* – the words of the *Vedas*; *iti* – thus; *cet* – if; *na* – no; *ataḥ* – from this; *prabhavāt* – because of creation; *pratyakṣa* – because of *śruti*; *anumānābhyām* – and *smṛti*.

**[If someone objects that this idea is inconsistent with the eternal nature of] the words in the *Vedas*, then I say no, because of [the description of] the creation [of the world, and also because of the evidence given] in *śruti* and *smṛti*.**

The idea stated here that the *devas* have bodies is not inconsistent with the nature of the words in the *Vedas*. Why? The *sūtra* says *prabhavāt pratyakṣānumānābhyām*: “Because of the description of the creation of the world and also because of the evidence given in *śruti* and *smṛti*.” The creation of the material bodies of the *devas* and other beings in the universe is done by Lord Brahmā, remembering their eternal, archetypal forms recorded in the statements of the *Vedas*. These archetypal forms are eternal, and existed before any of the bodies of the living entities were manifested. These archetypal forms are described by Viśvakarmā in his own scripture for drawing forms in the words *yamaṁ daṇḍa-pāṇim likhanti varuṇaṁ tu pāśa-hastam*: “They draw the demigod Yama with a mace in his hand, and the demigod Varuṇa with a noose in his hand.” The Vedic words describing the *devas* and other kinds of living entities are not names of specific individuals, but of certain classes of living entities, just as the word “cow” is the name of a certain kind of living entity.

Because the words of the *Vedas* are eternal, the *Vedas* are genuine sources of knowledge. This explanation is not at all inconsistent with the previously quoted explanation from the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*. Why is this? The *sūtra* says *pratyakṣānumānābhyām*, which means “because of the evidence given in *śruti* and *smṛti*.” The *śruti* [Pañca-vaiśvānara 6.9, 13 and 22] discussing the creation of the world, which was preceded by the eternal words of the *Vedas*, gives the following description:

*eta iti ha vai prajāpatiḥ devān asṛjat asṛgram iti manuṣyān indava iti pitṛīm tirah-pavitram iti grahān āsuva iti stotraṁ viśvānīti mantram abhisaubhagety anyāḥ prajāḥ*

“Reciting the word *ete* from the *Vedas*, Lord Brahmā created the *devas*. Reciting the word *asṛgram*, he created the human beings. Reciting the word *indava*, he created the *pitās*. Reciting the word *tirah-pavitram*, he created the planets. Reciting the word *asuva*, he created songs. Reciting the word *viśvāni*, he created *mantras*. Reciting the word *abhisaubhaga*, he created the other creatures.”

Both the primary creation by the Lord and the secondary creation by Lord Brahmā are performed by the power of Vedic sound vibration. The idea of mechanical creation held by the impersonalists and materialistic scientists will be refuted in Adhyāya 2 of *Vedānta-sūtra*. Kṛṣṇa describes the process of creation from Vedic sound vibration in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*śabda-brahma su-durbodhaṁ prāṇendriya-mano-mayam  
ananta-pāraṁ gambhīraṁ durvigāhyaṁ samudra-vat*

*yathorṇanābhīr hṛdayād ūrṇām udvamate mukhāt  
ākāśād ghoṣavān prāṇo manasā sparśa-rūpiṇā*

*chando-mayo 'mrta-mayaḥ sahasra-padavīm prabhuḥ  
omkārad vyañjita-sparśa-svaroṣmāntastha-bhūṣitām*

*vicitra-bhāṣā-vitatām chandobhiś catur-uttaraiḥ  
ananta-pārām brhatīm sṛjaty ākṣipate svayam*

“The transcendental sound of the *Vedas* is very difficult to comprehend and manifests on different levels within the *prāṇa*, senses and mind. This Vedic sound is unlimited, very deep and unfathomable, just like the ocean. ... Just as a spider brings forth from its heart its web and emits it through its mouth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests Himself as the reverberating primeval vital air, comprising all sacred Vedic meters and full of transcendental pleasure. Thus the Lord, from the ethereal sky of His heart, creates the great and limitless Vedic sound by the agency of His mind, which conceives of variegated sounds such as the *sparśas*. The Vedic sound branches out in thousands of directions, adorned with the different letters expanded from the syllable *om*: the consonants, vowels, sibilants and semivowels. The *Veda* is then elaborated by many verbal varieties, expressed in different meters, each having four more syllables than the previous one. Ultimately the Lord again withdraws His manifestation of Vedic sound within Himself.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.21.36, 38-40]

The *smṛti* also confirms this in the following words [*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.5.64]:

*nāma rūpaṁ ca bhūtānām  
kṛtyānām ca prapañcanam  
veda-śabdebhya evādau  
devādīnām cakāra saḥ*

“By reciting the words of the *Vedas* in the beginning, Lord Brahmā created the names and forms of the material elements, the rituals, the *devas*, and all other living entities.”

### Sūtra 1.3.29

*ata eva ca nityatvam*

*ataḥ eva* – therefore; *ca* – and; *nityatvam* – eternity.

**And therefore the eternity [of the *Veda* is proved].**

The eternity of the *Vedas* is proved by the fact that the creator Lord Brahmā creates the world by reciting the Vedic words describing the eternal forms and by remembering the previous creation. Kāṭhaka Muni and the other sages should be understood to be merely the speakers and not the authors of the *Vedas*. It is stated in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*:

“The *Vedas*, in their entirety, are eternal, enduring, and present in the mind of Viṣṇu; in creation after creation, they are brought up as they are, with the same order, same characters and the same notes, never otherwise.”

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*ūrdhva-mūlam adhaḥ-śākham*  
*aśvattham prāhur avyayam*  
*chandāmsi yasya parṇāni*  
*yas taṁ veda sa veda-vit*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “It is said that there is an imperishable banyan tree that has its roots upward and its branches down and whose leaves are the Vedic hymns. One who knows this tree is the knower of the *Vedas*.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.1]

The objection may be raised: “So be it. The *śruti* explains that by remembering the words of the *Vedas* Lord Brahmā creates the forms of the *devas* and other living entities. This may be in the case after the partial cosmic devastation [*naimittika*], but how can this method of creation be employed after the complete cosmic devastation [*prākṛta*], when absolutely everything is destroyed, and how can the *Vedas* be eternal under the circumstances of such complete destruction?”

If this is said, then he replies:

### **Sūtra 1.3.30**

*samāna-nāma-rūpatvāc cāvṛttāv apy avirodho darśanāt smṛteś ca*

*samāna* – same; *nāma* – because of the names; *rūpatvāt* – and forms; *ca* – also; *avṛttāu* – in the repetition; *api* – also; *avirodhaḥ* – not a contradiction; *darśanāt* – because of the *śruti*; *smṛteś* – because of the *smṛti*; *ca* – indeed.

**Because the names and forms remain the same even at the beginning of a new creation, there is no contradiction. This is proved by *śruti* and *smṛti*.**

The word *ca* [indeed] is used here to dispel doubt. That after a complete cosmic devastation there must be a new creation does not at all disprove the eternalness of the words of the *Vedas*. Why? The *sūtra* says *samāna-nāma-rūpatvāc cāvṛttāv apy avirodho darśanāt smṛteś ca*: “Because the names and forms remain the same even at the beginning of a new creation, there is no contradiction. This is proved by *śruti* and *smṛti*.”

The core of the meaning is “Because the previously spoken names and forms remain the same.” At the time of the great cosmic devastation, the eternal *Vedas* and the eternal archetypal forms described by the *Vedas* enter Lord Hari, the master of transcendental potencies, and rest within Him, becoming one with Him. At the time of the next creation they again become manifested from the Lord. Lord Hari and the four-faced demigod Brahmā both precede their acts of creation with recitation of Vedic *mantras*, which leads to meditation on the archetypal forms. At the time of a new creation, the Creator remembers what He created in the previous creation, and He again creates as He did before. This is like a potter, who by saying the word “pot” remembers the forms of pots he previously fashioned, and goes on to make another pot just like them. The process of creation after the partial cosmic devastation, and also after the complete cosmic devastation, is performed in this way.

How is all this known? The *sūtra* says *darśanāt smṛteś ca*: “Because this is proved by *śruti* and *smṛti*.” The *śruti* says:

*ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt sa aikṣata lokān utsṛjāḥ*

“In the beginning was only the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He thought: I shall create many worlds.” [*Aitareya Upaniṣad* 1.1]

*yo brahmāṇam vidadhāti pūrvaṁ yo vai vedāṁś ca prahiṇoti tasmi tam*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead created the *Vedas* and taught them to the demigod Brahmā.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.18]

*sūryā-candramasau dhātā yathā-pūrvam akalpat*

“Brahmā created the sun and moon as he had done before.” [Rg Veda]

The *smṛti* says:

*nyagrodhaḥ su-mahān alpe  
yathā bīje vyavasthitaḥ  
samyame viśvam akhilaṁ  
bīja-bhūte yathā tvayi*

“O Lord, just as a great banyan tree rests within a tiny seed, in the same way at the time of cosmic devastation the entire universe rests within You, the seed from which it originally sprouted.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

*nārāyaṇaḥ paro devas  
tasmāj jātaś caturmukhaḥ*

“Nārāyaṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. From him the demigod Brahmā was born.” [Varāha Purāṇa]

*tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.1]

A summary of this explanation follows: The Supreme Personality of Godhead, at the end of the period of cosmic devastation, meditating on the material universe as it had been before, desiring in His heart “I shall become many,” differentiating again the *jīvas* and material elements that had become merged within Him, creating again the material universe extending from the *mahat-tattva* to the demigod Brahmā as it had been before, manifesting the *Vedas* exactly as they had been before, teaching the *Vedas* to the demigod Brahmā within his heart, engaging the demigod Brahmā in the creation of the forms of the *devas* and other living entities as they had been before, and personally entering the universe and controlling it from within. Omniscient by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the demigod Brahmā, meditating on the archetypal forms described in the *Vedas*, creates the *devas* and other creatures as they had been before. In this way the relationship between the names of the *devas* headed by Indra and their archetypal forms described in the *Vedas* is explained.

So the opponent’s argument of the Vedic words does not at all refute this explanation of the nature of the *devas*, therefore it is proved that the *devas* and other superior beings have the ability to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead’s form being the size of a thumb is not at all contradicted by this description of the ability of the *devas* to meditate on Him. This is so because the form of the Lord is the size of a *deva*’s thumb in this case.

Now will be considered the question of whether the *devas* are eligible or not to engage in those meditations where they themselves are the object of meditation. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [3.1.1] is the statement

*asau vā ādityo deva-madhu tasya dyaur eva tiraścīna-vamśaḥ*

“The sun is honey for the *devas*. The heavenly planets are the crossbeam, the sky is the beehive, and the rays of sunlight are the children.”

It is said here that the sun is the honey of the *devas*, and the rays of sunlight are the openings for drinking the honey. Five classes of *devas*—the *vasus*, *rudras*, *ādityas*, *maruts*, and *sādhyas*—all headed by their leaders, gaze at the honey of the sun and become happy. The sun is called honey because it is the abode of a certain sweetness; one becomes eligible for this sweetness by performing certain religious sacrifices described in the *R̥g Veda*, and one attains it by entering through the doorway of the sun’s rays. It is also said that the *devas* can perform these meditations in other places in the scriptures. For example, it is stated in the *Padma Purāṇa* [*Sṛṣṭi-khaṇḍa*, Chapter 17]:

“Accompanied by *brāhmaṇas* and other *devas*, or demigods, Lord Brahmā once went to Puṣkara to perform a sacrifice.”

*vedāham antar manasīpsitam te  
dadāmi yat tad duravāpam anyaiḥ  
satre purā viśva-srjām vasūnām  
mat-siddhi-kāmena vaso tvayeṣṭaḥ*

“O Vasu, I know from within your mind what you desired in the days of yore when the Vasus and other demigods responsible for expanding the universal affairs performed sacrifices. You particularly desired to achieve My association. This is very difficult to obtain for others, but I award it unto you.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.4.11]

*prajāpates te śvaśurasya sāmpratam  
niryāpito yajña-mahotsavaḥ kila  
vayam ca tatrābhisarāma vāma te  
yady arthitāmī vibudhā vrajanti hi*

“My dear Lord Śiva, your father-in-law is now executing great sacrifices, and all the demigods, having been invited by him, are going there. If you desire, we may also go.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.3.8]

The author of the *sūtras* now explains the opinions of others in this matter.

### Sūtra 1.3.31

*madhv-ādiṣv asambhavād anadhikāram jaiminiḥ*

*madhu-ādiṣu* – in *madhu-vidyā* and other Vedic meditations; *asambhavāt* – because of impossibility; *anadhikāram* – qualification; *jaiminiḥ* – Jaimini.

**Jaimini says the *devas* do not engage in *madhu-vidyā* and other forms of Vedic meditation because it is not possible for them to do so.**

Jaimini Muni thinks that the *devas* are not qualified to engage in *madhu-vidyā* and other forms of Vedic meditation. Why? The *sūtra* says *asambhavāt*: “Because it is not possible for them to do so.” The object of worship cannot also be the worshiper. It is not possible for one person to be both. Furthermore, because the *devas* do not aspire to attain the result of *madhu-vidyā* meditation, namely to become *vasus* or exalted *devas*, because they already are *vasus* and *devas*.

### Sūtra 1.3.32

*jyotiṣi bhāvāc ca*

*jyotiṣi* – in the splendor; *bhāvāt* – because of existence; *ca* – and.

**And because the *devas* do meditate on the effulgent Supreme Personality of Godhead.**

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.16] says:

*tad devā jyotiṣāṃ jyotiḥ*

“The *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the light of all lights.”

Because the *devas* do meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is described in this passage from the *śruti* as the supreme effulgence, they naturally do not engage in the *madhu-vidyā* and other inferior meditations. The explanation that the *devas*, as well as the human beings, naturally engage in meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead shows that the *devas* are averse to any other kind of meditation.

Now that this view has been expressed, he [Vyāsa] gives his opinion.

### Sūtra 1.3.33

*bhāvaṃ tu bādarāyaṇo 'sti hi*

*bhāvaṃ* – existence; *tu* – but; *bādarāyaṇaḥ* – Vyāsadeva; *asti* – is; *hi* – because.

**Vyāsadeva says the *devas* do engage in these meditations.**

The word *tu* [but] is used here to dispel doubt. Lord Vyāsa thinks the *devas* are able to engage in *madhu-vidyā* and other kinds of Vedic meditation. The word *hi* [because] here implies “desiring to again become *devas* and *ādityas*, they worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the archetypal *deva* and *aditya*. Because of this worship they develop a desire to gain the company of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way it is possible for them to engage in the *madhu-vidyā* and other Vedic meditations.” This is so because it is understood that the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is both the goal and the means of attaining the goal.

They who are now *vasus*, *ādityas*, and other kinds of *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the archetypal *vasu* and *āditya*. At the end of the *kalpa* they become *vasus* and *ādityas* and engage in the meditation and worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul in their hearts, and who is the cause of their becoming *vasus* and *ādityas* again. As a result of this worship they will eventually become liberated.

The words *āditya*, *vasu*, and the names of the other *devas*, are all also names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is confirmed by the words *ya etam evaṃ brahmopaniṣadam veda*: “He who understands this *Upaniṣad* describing the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” at the end of the *Upaniṣad*.

It is not that because the *devas* have already attained their exalted positions therefore they have no desire to become *devas* and therefore have no interest in attaining the results of Vedic meditation. This is so because it is seen in this world that many people, even though they already have sons in this lifetime, yearn to again have sons in the next life. Furthermore, because they are actually meditations on the Supreme Personality of Godhead the *madhu-vidyā* meditations of the *devas* are described in the words of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [4.4.16]

*tad devā jyotiṣāṃ jyotir*

“The *devas* meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

The scriptures say

*prajāpatir akāmayata prajāyeyeti sa etad agnihotraṃ mithunam apaśyat. Tad udite sūrye juhot.*



The demigod Brahmā desired: “Let me create children.” He then saw two *agnihotra* sacrifices. When the sun rose he performed *agnihotra* sacrifices.

The scriptures also say

*devā vai satram āsata*

“The *devas* then performed a Vedic sacrifice.”

These and other passages from the scriptures show that the *śruti* does not disagree with the idea that the *devas* are able to perform Vedic sacrifices. They perform these sacrifices by the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in order to protect the material world.

Now someone may object: “They who perform the *madhu-vidyā* and other Vedic meditations must wait many *kalpas* before they attain liberation. How is it possible for one who yearns for liberation to tolerate such a delay? They who yearn for liberation do not desire to enjoy any material happiness, even the happiness of Brahmaloḥa.”

The answer is given: This is true. Still, the scriptures explain that because of certain unknown past actions some persons voluntarily postpone their personal liberation to take up the duties of administering the affairs of the material world. This *Adhikaraṇa* shows that because even the *devas* perform the ordinary Vedic duties, how much more so should human beings perform these duties.

### ***Adhikaraṇa 8: Śūdras Not Qualified For Vedic Meditation***

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: It was stated above that human beings, *devas*, and other higher beings are qualified to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not possible to meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead without having studied and properly understood the *Vedānta*, for one has to know what he is meditating on, and that information is given in *Vedānta-sūtra* and similar Vedic works. Therefore the scriptures say *aupaniṣadaḥ puruṣaḥ*: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is revealed in the *Upaniṣads*.” From this the next topic follows.

In the beginning of *Vedānta-sūtra*, we discussed the need for adequate qualifications of the student. This understanding is expressed by the word *athāto* [now, therefore] in *Sūtra* 1.1.1, *athāto brahma-jijñāsā*: “Now, therefore, one should desire to inquire about the Absolute.” We see the application of this principle every day in our teaching work, where we contact many people to share the wealth of this exalted science of the Absolute Truth. Every living entity is a spirit soul, and therefore in principle everyone is qualified to study this great Esoteric Teaching of the *Vedas* which is for their greatest good; but in actual practice we find that very few can actually take it up. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa confirms:

*manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu  
kaścid yatati siddhaye  
yatatām api siddhānām  
kaścin mām vetti tattvataḥ*

“Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.3]

When a spirit soul, although eternal and pure by nature, becomes entangled in the actions and reactions of the material world, his natural spiritual intelligence becomes covered over by nescience. He then sees things in terms of temporary, relative material designations instead of in relation to the Absolute Truth. Because of this ignorance, he commits many sinful activities, and then has to suffer for them. Until he sincerely desires to escape from this life of suffering, he is blocked by his *karma* from approaching a self-realized soul and taking up the study of *Vedānta*.

This understanding is inherent in the Vedic concept of *varṇāśrama-dharma*. In this system, people are classified into four occupational divisions and four orders of spiritual life. The occupational divisions are *brāhmaṇas* [intellectuals], *kṣatriyas* [warriors and administrators], *vaiśyas* [farmers and businessmen] and *śūdras* [workers], and the spiritual orders are *brahmacārīs* [celibate students], *gṛhasthas* [householders], *vānaprasthas* [retirees] and *sannyāsīs* [renunciants.]

*cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam*  
*guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ*  
*tasya kartāram api mām*  
*viddhy akartāram avyayam*

“According to the three modes of material nature and the work ascribed to them, the four divisions of human society were created by Me. And, although I am the creator of this system, you should know that I am yet the non-doer, being unchangeable.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13]

It is understood that people all over the world naturally fall into these occupational categories, whether or not they subscribe to the Vedic model of understanding. This is because the entire system is based on the concept of the three modes of material nature [*guṇas*]. The intelligent class of men called *brāhmaṇas* are situated in the mode of goodness. The administrative class called the *kṣatriyas* are situated in the mode of passion. The mercantile men, the *vaiśyas* are situated in the mixed modes of passion and ignorance, and the *śūdras* or laborer class are situated in the ignorant mode of material nature.

Thus these classifications of people exist in every society, and we find that the great mass of people are *śūdras*. The intelligent class of *brāhmaṇas* is a very small minority of the population. And even among the *brāhmaṇas*, most are engaged in pursuing temporary material opulence by intellectual work, and very few are interested in self-realization and spiritual culture. However, the qualifications of a *brāhmaṇa* are required to engage in the study and practice of *Vedānta*. Consequently very few people can begin, and even fewer can successfully complete the study of *Vedānta* philosophy, because the exalted qualifications of a *brāhmaṇa* are rarely found in human society, especially today.

It is important to note that these classifications are not determined by birth, but by the qualities and activities of the individual. Moreover, they are subject to modification by experience and training. Thus even a *śūdra*, if he is willing to take up the Vedic disciplines of abstention from meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex and gambling, and chant the Holy Name of the Lord under the direction of a self-realized soul, can advance in spiritual life until he develops the purity and intelligence of a *brāhmaṇa* and becomes qualified to study *Vedānta* philosophy. However this kind of transformation requires enormous austerity, determination, patience and self-discipline, qualities that unfortunately are rarely found in *śūdras*.

*śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ*  
*kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca*  
*jñānaṁ vijñānam āstikyaṁ*  
*brahma-karma svabhāva-jam*

“Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, wisdom, knowledge, and religiousness—these are the qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.43]

We generally find that only those who already possess the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa* can successfully study and practice the path of *Vedānta* philosophy; although it is theoretically possible for others, the requirements are usually too demanding. Therefore teachers of *Vedānta* generally screen their students for these qualities, and do not accept those who are, in their judgment, unqualified. They have learned by hard experience that trying to teach these exalted and recondite truths to an unqualified student is a

recipe for heartache. Therefore they test each prospective student to see whether he is sufficiently pure and determined. For example, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [4.1.1-5] narrates the story of Janaśruti Pautrāyaṇa:

There was a king named Janaśruti Pautrāyaṇa. He was a hospitable prince and profuse in his generosity, possessing many good qualities. The mighty *devaṛṣis* were satisfied with his high-mindedness and assuming the forms of swans, flew across his palace when the prince was lying in the open air on the roof on a sultry summer evening. The swan in the rear addressed the swan in the front, saying “O short-sighted one, do you not see the auric light of this noble prince, extending from his body high up into the air? Do not heedlessly cross his aura, lest it may destroy you.” Hearing this the other swan replied, “Is his aura stronger than Raiṅka Muni? Raiṅka is always on his chariot, making pilgrimages from one sacred place to another, and thus sanctifying all those shrines with his aura. He possesses a Brahmic aura, far more potent than the aura of this petty prince.” The object of the compassionate *ṛṣis* was to break the shell of self-complacency into which the prince had unconsciously fallen, so that he would not rest satisfied with the mere performance of charity, though on a profuse scale, and might make efforts to know the Brahma-vidyā.

The king hearing this speech of the swans, found out his inferiority to Raiṅka and was distressed in his heart, passing the night in a state of restless grief. At dawn when the royal bards were playing soft music praising the king and his many noble qualities, the prince rising from his bed, at once sent for his chamberlain and told him to find out without delay the location of this Raiṅka, who was always traveling in his chariot. The chamberlain, after much effort, found Raiṅka in a secluded spot, sitting under his chariot and scratching his itches. He at once returned to the king and informed him of his discovery.

The king taking cows, gold and chariots, went to Raiṅka, and presenting them to him said “Venerable Sir, teach me the God that you worship.” Raiṅka replied, away with your necklace and chariots, O Śūdra! Let your cows remain with you.” Thus rejected and called a *śūdra*, the king went back and brought more wealth, cows, chariots and even his daughter as a present for the sage. But Raiṅka again sarcastically addressed him as a *śūdra*, saying “You hope to gain this knowledge through these means?” However he ultimately relented and taught the king the science of *saṁvarga-vidyā* or meditation on the laws of dissolution.

In this story, after hearing the words of some swans, Jānaśruti approached Raiṅka Muni and offered him many cows, necklaces, and chariots. Raiṅka, however, said *ahaha hāre tvā śūdra tavaiva saha gobhir astu*: “O Śūdra, keep your cows, necklaces, and chariots!” After being addressed as a *śūdra* in this way, Jānaśruti again came, this time offering cows, necklaces, chariots, and his daughter in marriage. Raiṅka this time replied *tam ājahāremāḥ śūdrānaiva mukhenālāpayiṣyathāḥ*: “O Śūdra, take this away! You hope to gain this knowledge through these means?” Then the *Upaniṣad* describes how Raiṅka taught him the science of *saṁvarga-vidyā*.

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Is a *śūdra* qualified to study the Vedic knowledge or not?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: A *śūdra* is qualified to study the *Vedas* for the following reasons: 1. because it is said that all human beings are qualified, 2. because *śūdras* have the ability to study, 3. because the *śruti* sometimes uses the word *śūdra*, thus hinting that *śūdras* are qualified to read the *Vedas*, and 4. because Vidura and other *śūdras* are described as knowers of the *Vedas* in the *Purāṇas* and other Vedic literatures.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

### Sūtra 1.3.34

*śug asya tad-anādara-śravaṇāt tadādravaṇāt sūcyate hi*

*śug* – sorrow; *asya* – of him; *tad* – that; *anādara* – disrespect; *śravaṇāt* – because of hearing; *tadā* – then; *adravaṇāt* – because of approaching; *sūcyate* – is indicated; *hi* – because.

**Because he approached impelled by unhappiness from hearing an insult, the word *śūdra* here means “unhappy.”**

The word *na* [not], taken from *Sūtra* 1.3.28, is understood in this *sūtra* also. Here it means “a *śūdra* is not qualified to study the *Vedas*.” Why? The *sūtra* says *hi*, which here means “because.” Because Jānaśruti Pautrāyaṇa, who was not enlightened with spiritual knowledge, by hearing the swans’ disrespectful words *kam u vara enam etat santam sayugvānam iva rainkam āttha*: “What is he compared to the great saint Rainka?” became unhappy [*śuk*] and thus ran [*dru*] to meet Rainka. The word *śūdra* here means “he who was unhappy” and “he who ran.” The sage uses the word *śūdra* here to display his omniscience in knowing the previous events. The word is not used here to indicate the fourth class of men: the *śūdras*.

Rainka wanted to impress Jānaśruti that the esoteric religion of *Vedānta* or *bhagavata-dharma* cannot be approached through external means such as charity, performance of sacrifice, etc. These are only preliminary. Neither should one be motivated to approach a great teacher or the Supreme Lord by personal unhappiness or envy, but by love and a desire to serve. When Arjuna approaches Kṛṣṇa in the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* for relief from his lamentation over having to fight his relatives in the Battle of Kurukṣetra, the first thing Kṛṣṇa tells him is that such lamentation is for fools.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*aśocyān anvaśocas tvam*  
*prajñā-vādāmś ca bhāṣase*  
*gatāsūn agatāsūmś ca*  
*nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ*

The Blessed Lord said: “While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. Those who are wise lament neither for the living nor the dead.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.11]

So even if Jānaśruti is not a *śūdra*, he was acting like one because he approached the sage Rainka out of envy and grief. These are not proper motivations for learning transcendental knowledge, therefore Rainka rejected him. If Jānaśruti is not a *śūdra*, then to what class does he belong? To answer this question the next *sūtra* says he is a *kṣatriya*.

### Sūtra 1.3.35

*kṣatriyatvāvagates cottaratra caitrarathena liṅgāt*

*kṣatriyatva* – status of being a *kṣatriya*; *avagates* – from the understanding; *ca* – also; *uttaratra* – in a later passage; *caitrarathena* – with Caitraratha; *liṅgāt* – because of the sign.

**That he is a *kṣatriya* is understood from the clue related to the *caitraratha*.**

Jānaśruti is understood to be a *kṣatriya*. He possesses religious faith and a host of other virtues. He is very charitable. He gives charity generously. He is the ruler of the people. Because he sent a messenger

to search for Rainka and because he gave cows, necklaces, chariots, his daughter, and many other things in charity, it is said that he is a *kṣatriya*. It is not possible for anyone but a *kṣatriya* to possess these qualities. Because he thus displays the qualities of a king, Jānaśruti should be understood to be a *kṣatriya*. At the end of the story it is also understood that he is a *kṣatriya*. At the end of the story, where the description of *saṁvarga-vidyā* is concluded, there is mention of the *kṣatriya* status of a person named Abhipratārī Caitraratha. In the concluding passage a *brahmacārī* begged alms from Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī Kākṣaseni when these two were serving food to others.

If someone objects: “In this passage the status of Abhipratārī as either a *kṣatriya* or *caitraratha* is not proved in any way,” then the *sūtra* answers: *līngāt*: “Because of a clue.” The clue that Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī Kākṣaseni were friends proves it. The *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa* [20.12.5] says: *caitena caitraratham kāpeyo ayājayan*: “The members of the Kāpeya family made Caitraratha perform a sacrifice.” In this way the *śruti* maintains that because of his relationship with the Kāpeyas, Abhipratārī must have been a Caitraratha.

That the Caitraratha family were *kṣatriyas* is confirmed by the words *tasmāc caitrarathir nāma kṣatrapatir ajāyata*: “From him was born another *kṣatriya* of the Caitraratha family.” In this way his *kṣatriya* status is clearly proved. Therefore Śaunaka Kāpeya and Abhipratārī Caitraratha, who were both learned in *saṁvarga-vidyā*, were a *brāhmaṇa* and a *kṣatriya* respectively, and in the subject of *saṁvarga-vidyā* they were also *guru* and *disciple* respectively. Rainka and Jānaśruti had the same relationship, and therefore Jānaśruti must have been a *kṣatriya*. In this way it is proved that a *śūdra* is not qualified to study the *Vedas*.

Referring to the *śruti*, he again establishes this point.

## Sūtra 1.3.36

*saṁskāra-parāmarṣāt tad-abhāvābhilāpāc ca*

*saṁskāra* – of the purificatory rituals; *parāmarṣāt* – because of the reference; *tad* – of them; *abhāva* – of the non-existence; *abhilāpāt* – because of the explanation; *ca* – also.

**This is also so because the scriptures state both the necessity of undergoing the *saṁskāras* [rituals of purification] and the exclusion of the *śūdras* from these rituals.**

In the *śruti-śāstra* is the passage:

*aṣṭa-varṣam brāhmaṇam upanīyata tam adhyāpayed ekādeśe kṣatriyam dvādaśe vaiśyam*

“One should perform the *saṁskāra* and teach a *brāhmaṇa* boy when he is eight years old a *kṣatriya* boy when he is eleven years old, and a *vaiśya* boy when he is twelve years old.”

This shows that *brāhmaṇas* are eligible to study the *Vedas* because they are also eligible for the *saṁskāras*. The scriptures also say:

*nāgnir na yajño na kriyā na saṁskāro na vratāni śūdrasya*

“A *śūdra* is not allowed to light the sacred fire, perform a fire-sacrifice, perform religious rituals, undergo the *saṁskāras*, or follow vows of penance.”

In this way it is established that because a *śūdra* is not allowed to undergo the *saṁskāras*, he is also not allowed to study the *Vedas*. The twice-born classes of men, namely the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, are expected to undergo a cultural purificatory process known as *saṁskāras* or purification by Vedic rituals. The *dvija-bandhus* [friends of the twice-born] are those who are born in the families of

*brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, but who are not equal to their forefathers because they do not go through the *saṁskāras*. Such descendants are not recognized as twice-born for want of purificatory qualifications.

The *saṁskāras* [purificatory activities] begin even before the birth of a child, with the seed-giving reformatory process called *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*. One who is not the product of a *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*, or conscious conception ceremony, is not accepted as being an actual *dvija* [twice-born man]. If the father and the mother do not perform *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra* and simply beget children out of passion, their children are called *dvija-bandhus*. The *dvija-bandhus* are certainly not as intelligent or spiritually advanced as the children created in the *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra*, because the *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra* is required to attract the most qualified soul to the womb of the mother. The *dvija-bandhus* are classified with the *śūdras* and the woman class, who are by nature less intelligent. The *śūdras* and the woman class do not have to undergo any *saṁskāra* except the ceremony of marriage.

To be fully accepted as a *dvija*, the *garbhādhāna-saṁskāra* must be followed by other *saṁskāras*, of which the sacred thread ceremony is performed at the time of spiritual initiation. The seed-giving *saṁskāra* is considered the first birth, and the spiritual initiation is considered the second birth, after which one is fully qualified as twice-born. Only one who has been able to undergo such important *saṁskāras*, or attain their equivalent by spiritual training, discipline and initiation, can be called a bona fide *dvija* [twice-born].

Now he confirms the view that the *śūdras* are not eligible for the *saṁskāras*.

### Sūtra 1.3.37

*tad-abhāva-nirdhāraṇe ca pravṛtteḥ*

*tat* – of that; *abhāva* – of the non-existence; *nirdhāraṇe* – in ascertaining; *ca* – also; *pravṛtteḥ* – because of endeavor.

**[This is so] also because care is taken to determine that [a student] is not [a śūdra].**

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [4.4.4-5] when asked about his *varṇa*, Jābāli said:

*nāham etad vede bho yad gotro 'ham asmi*

“I do not know into what *varṇa* I was born.”

These truthful words convinced the sage Gautama that Jābāla was not a *śūdra*. Gautama then said:

*na itad abrahmaṇo vivaktum arhati samidham saumyāhara tvopaneṣye na satyād agāḥ*

“One who is not a *brāhmaṇa* cannot speak in this way. O gentle one, please bring the sacred fuel and I shall initiate you as a *brāhmaṇa*. You did not deviate from the truth.”

This endeavor by the *guru* Gautama to determine the *varṇa* of Jābāli before accepting him as a student demonstrates that only the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, and *vaiśyas* are eligible to receive the *saṁskāras*. The *śūdras* are not eligible, because they generally suffer from the animalistic tendencies of uncontrolled senses. Only one who can control the senses, not by force but by intelligence, can make real spiritual advancement.

*karmendriyāṇi samyamya  
ya āste manasā smaran*

*indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā  
mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate*

*yas tv indriyāṇi manasā  
niyamyārabhate 'rjuna  
karmendriyaiḥ karma-yogam  
asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate*

“One who restrains the senses and organs of action, but whose mind dwells on sense objects, certainly deludes himself and is called a pretender. On the other hand, he who controls the senses by the mind and engages his active organs in works of devotion, without attachment, is by far superior.” [Bhagavad-gītā 3.6-7]

So artificial control of the senses is equally condemned, because it leads to hypocrisy. Actual renunciation means that one realizes the true nature of the self as spirit soul and also realizes his eternal loving service relationship with the Lord. He then automatically ceases to desire material things, for they can never satisfy the soul, nor can they equal the spiritually attractive qualities of the Supreme Brahman.

### Sūtra 1.3.38

*śravaṇādhyayanārthaṁ pratiṣedhāt smṛteś ca*

*śravaṇa* – hearing; *ādhyayana* – study; *arthaṁ* – for the purpose; *pratiṣedhāt* – because of the prohibition; *smṛteḥ* – from the *smṛti-śāstra*; *ca* – also.

**This is so because the *smṛti-śāstra* also prohibits the *śūdras* from hearing and studying [the *Vedas*.]**

The *smṛti-śāstra* says

*pady u ha vā etat śmaśānaṁ yac chūdras tasmāc chūdra-samīpe nādhyetavyam*

“A *śūdra* is a beast. He is a crematorium. For this reason he should not be taught the *Vedas*.”

The *smṛti* also says

*tasmāc chūdro bahu-paśur ayajñīyaḥ*

“A *śūdra* is a big beast. He cannot perform the Vedic sacrifices.”

Because of these prohibitions a *śūdra* is not eligible to hear the *Vedas*. Because he is not allowed to hear the *Vedas*, it is therefore also not possible for him to study the *Vedas*, understand their meaning, or follow the rituals and penances described in them; what to speak of approaching the *sanctus sanctorum* of *Vedānta*. All these are forbidden for him.

The *smṛti-śāstra* says

*nāgnir na yajñāḥ śūdrasya tathaivādhyayanam kutaḥ kevalaiva tu śuśruṣā tri-varṇānām  
vidhīyate*

“A *śūdra* is not allowed to light the sacred fire or perform Vedic sacrifices. Neither is he allowed to study the *Vedas*. What is he allowed to do? His sole duty is to faithfully serve the three higher *varṇas*.”

The *smṛti* also says

*vedākṣara-vicāraṇe śūdro patati tat-kṣaṇāt*

“A *śūdra* who studies the *Vedas* at once falls into degraded life.”

There are also prohibitions against *śūdras* studying the Vedic sciences, such as astrology and other *vedāṅgas*. This is because materialistic, sensual-minded people will always misunderstand and misbehave, making offenses to the *Vedas*, to the Lord and the elevated devotees. Therefore it is actually better for them to keep them away from the more esoteric teachings, so they cannot damage their spiritual life any further by their natural offensiveness.

Some souls, such as Vidura and others, although born as *śūdras*, become elevated by their attainment of perfect transcendental knowledge. By hearing and understanding the *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata* and other transcendental literatures suited to their understanding, following the regulative principles of abstention from meat eating, intoxication, illicit sex, gambling and speculation, and chanting the Holy Name of the Lord under the direction of a self-realized spiritual master, *śūdras* and others can become liberated. While the standards of Vedic society are very high, the only real classes of higher and lower among men are determined by the final spiritual result of their lives.

*mām hi pārtha vyapāsritya  
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ  
striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās  
te 'pi yānti parām gatim*

“O son of Prthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth—women, *vaiśyas* [merchants], as well as *śūdras* [workers]—can approach the supreme destination.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.32]

*kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā  
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ  
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ  
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

“Kirātas, Hūṇas, Āndhras, Pulindas, Pulkaśas, Ābhīras, Śumbhas, Yavanas, members of the Khasa races, and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of devotees of the Lord, for He is the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him. Even such sinful persons can certainly all be purified if they chant the holy name of the Lord under the direction of a pure devotee.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.4.18]

*brahma-hā piṭṛ-hā go-ghno  
māṭṛ-hācārya-hāghavān  
śvādaḥ pulkasako vāpi  
śuddhyeran yasya kīrtanāt*

“One who has killed a *brāhmaṇa*, one who has killed a cow or one who has killed his father, mother or spiritual master can be immediately freed from all sinful reactions simply by chanting the holy name of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Other sinful persons, such as dog-eaters and *caṇḍālas*, who are less than *śūdras*, can also be freed in this way.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.13.8]

## **Adhikaraṇa 9: The ‘Thunderbolt’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead**

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: Now that the digression of Adhikaraṇas 7 and 8 is concluded, he again reflects on the original topic, namely how the Supreme Personality of Godhead is discussed under various names in the scriptures. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [2.6.17-18] is read the following passage:



*yad idam kiñcit jagat sarvaṁ  
prāṇa ejati niḥśṛtam  
mahad bhayaṁ vajram udyataṁ  
ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti*

“This transcendental Person is always seated in the hearts of men. Let a man draw that Self forth from his body, like drawing the pith from a reed. Let him know that Self as the effulgent, immortal Lord, yea as the bright and effulgent Lord. When He breathes, all the manifested world trembles in fear. They who know this thunderbolt become immortal.”

*Samśaya* [arisa of doubt]: Does the word *vajra* here mean “thunderbolt” or the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: Because the *vajra* here causes trembling, and because the description of liberation attained by understanding this *vajra* is merely a collection of meaningless poetic words, the word *vajra* here should be understood to mean “thunderbolt.” For these reasons, and because the word *prāṇa* here does not mean “breath” but “protector,” in this passage it is not possible to say that the word *vajra* means “the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” Because the phrase *udyataṁ vajram* [raised thunderbolt] contradicts this second interpretation, the word *vajra* must mean “thunderbolt.”

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

### Sūtra 1.3.39

*kampanāt*

*kampanāt* – because of trembling.

**Because [the entire world] trembles [the *vajra* must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead].**

Because it makes the entire universe tremble, this *vajra* must be the Supreme Personality of Godhead and not an ordinary thunderbolt. This is so also because of the following statement of *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*:

*cakraṁ caṅkramaṇād eṣa  
vajanād vajram ucyate  
khaṇḍanāt khaḍga evaiṣa  
heti-nāmā hariḥ svayam*

“Because He goes [*caṅkramaṇa*] everywhere He is called “Cakra” [moving in a circle]. Because He moves about [*vajana*] He is called “Vajra” [thunderbolt]. Because He cuts apart [*khaṇḍana*] the demons He is called “Khaḍga” [sword]. These are names of Lord Hari.”

Also, because the word *prāṇa* [breath] and the word *bhaya* [fear] are used, the passage must refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In these ways it is established that the word *vajra* here refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

### Sūtra 1.3.40

*jyotir-darśanāt*

*jyotiḥ* – effulgence; *darśanāt* – because of seeing.

**It is so because the *vajra* is described as *jyotiḥ* [splendor].**

Before the passage discussed is the following statement [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.15]:

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candra-tārake*

“When He does not shine, then neither sun, moon, nor stars show their splendor.”

After the passage discussed is the statement [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.3.3]

*bhayād asyāgnis tapati*

“Out of fear of Him fire glows.”

In both these passages the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as transcendental splendor, and therefore the passage describing the *vajra* [thunderbolt] between these two passages, must refer to the effulgent Supreme Personality of Godhead.

### ***Adhikaraṇa 10: The ‘Akāśa’ is the Supreme Personality of Godhead***

*Viśaya* [thesis or statement]: In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.14.1] is the following statement:

*ākāśo ha vai nāma-rūpayor nirvahitā te yad antarā tad brahma tad amṛtaṁ sa ātmā*

“Sky [*ākāśa*] is the creator of names and forms. That sky within is expanded without limit. That sky is eternal. That sky is the Self.”

*Samśaya* [arisaal of doubt]: Does the word “sky” here refer to the *jīva* liberated from bondage of repeated birth and death, or does “sky” here refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

*Pūrvapakṣa* [antithesis]: The scriptures say *aśva iva romāṇi vidhūya pāpam*: “As a horse shakes its mane, so do I shake off all sins and become liberated.” This shows that the “sky” here refers to the liberated *jīva*. The words *yad antarā* [which is within] clearly points to the liberated *jīva* who is free from all names and forms. This is also so because the phrase “the creator of names and forms” may refer to the *jīva* before he was liberated. The word *ākāśa* here means “effulgence.” Everything therefore indicates that the “sky” here is the liberated *jīva*. The words *tad brahma tad amṛtaṁ*: “It is expanded without limit. It is eternal,” describe the qualities the *jīva* attains when he becomes liberated.

*Siddhānta* [Vedic conclusion]: The conclusion follows.

### **Sūtra 1.3.41**

*ākāśo ‘rthāntaratvādi-vyapadeśāt*

*ākāśaḥ* – sky; *artha* – meaning; *antaratva* – difference; *ādi* – beginning with; *vyapadeśāt* – because of the description.

**The “sky” here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead because the “sky” described here is different from the liberated *jīva*, and for other reasons also.**

The “sky” here is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and not the liberated *jīva*. Why? The *sūtra* says *arthāntaratvādi-vyapadeśāt* [because the “sky” described here is different from the liberated *jīva*, and for other reasons also]. The meaning is this: Because the liberated *jīva* cannot be the creator of names and forms, the “sky” here must be something other than him. When the *jīva* is not liberated but bound

to the material world, he attains various names and forms by the force of his previous *karma*. By himself he has no power to create these names and forms. When the *jīva* is liberated he takes no part in the affairs of the material world, as will be described in a later *Sūtra* [4.4.17]. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, is described in the *śruti* as the creator of the material world. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* therefore says *anenajīvenātmanānupraviśya nāma-rūpe vyākaravāṇi*: “With the *jīvas* I will now enter the material world. Now I will create a variety of names and forms.” For all these reasons the “sky” here should be understood to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The word *ādi* [and for other reasons also] in the *sūtra* refers to the phrase *brahma* [expanded without limit] in the passage of the *Upaniṣad*. This phrase cannot describe the liberated *jīva*, although it may very naturally describe the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this way the word “sky” refers to a sky that is all-pervading. Because this description can properly refer only to the Supreme, the “sky” here is proved to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

An objector may say, “So be it. Still, it cannot be held that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is different from the liberated *jīva*. This is said because of the overwhelming evidence of scripture. For example, in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* it is said:

*katama ātmeti yo ‘yaṁ vijñānamayaḥ puruṣaḥ prāṇeṣu hṛdy-antar-jyotiḥ sa samānaḥ sann ubhau lokāṁ anusañcarati*

“Who is the Self? He is a person full of knowledge who stays in the life-breath. He is the splendor in the heart. Remaining always the same, he wanders in the two worlds.”

Describing the conditioned *jīva* in this way, the text continues:

*sa vā ayam ātmā brahma vijñānamayaḥ*

“This Self is the omniscient Brahman.”

In this way it says that the *jīva* is Brahman. It further says:

*athākāmayamānaḥ*

“He becomes free from all desires.”

This described the liberated *jīva*’s condition. Then it says:

*brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*

“Being Brahman, he attains Brahman.”

In this way it is conclusively stated that he is identical with Brahman. Then, at the end it says:

*abhayaṁ vai brahma bhavati ya eva veda*

“He who knows this becomes the fearless Brahman.”

The result of hearing the passage is given here. The statement, in some passages, that the *jīva* and Brahman are different are like the sky within a pot and the great sky beyond it. When he is liberated, the *jīva* becomes the Supreme just as when the pot is broken the sky in the pot becomes the same as the great sky beyond. Because the *jīva* is thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is the creator of the universes and everything else that the Supreme is. In this way there is no difference between the liberated *jīva* and the Supreme Brahman.”

*Siddhānta [Vedic conclusion]*: To refute this, he says:

### Sūtra 1.3.42

*suṣupty-utkrāntyor bhedena*

*suṣupti* – in dreamless sleep; *utkrāntyor* – and in death; *bhedena* – because of the difference.

**Because the difference is present in both death and dreamless sleep.**

The word *vyapadeśāt* [because of the description], which was used in the previous *sūtra*, should be understood in this *sūtra* also. In the previously quoted passages it is not possible to derive the understanding that the liberated *jīva* is actually Brahman. Why? Because it is clearly explained that in the states of dreamless sleep and death the *jīva* and Brahman are different. The difference in dreamless sleep is described in these words [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.3.12]:

*prājñenātmanā sampariṣvakto na bāhyam kiñcana veda nāntaram*

“Embraced by the omniscient Self, he knows nothing else, either without or within.”

The difference in death is described in these words from the same passage:

*prājñenātmanā anvārūḍha utsarjan yāti*

“Mounted by the omniscient Self, and groaning, he leaves.”

The word *utsarjan* here means groaning. It is not possible that the *jīva*, who knows hardly anything, can be the omniscient Self by whom he is mounted. Because the *jīva* is not omniscient it is also not possible that the omniscient Self here is another *jīva*.

If it is said “Because in these conditions the *jīva* is still influenced by material designations, your point is not proved,” then the author replies:

### Sūtra 1.3.43

*paty-ādi-śabdebhyaḥ*

*pati* – Lord; *ādi* – beginning with; *śabdebhyaḥ* – because of the words.

**Because of the use of Pati [Lord] and other words.**

In the same *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, a little afterwards, the word *pati* and other similar words are used in this passage [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22]:

*sa vā ayam ātmā sarvasya vaśī sarvasyeṣaṇaḥ sarvasyādhipatiḥ sarvam idam praśāsti yad idam kiñca sa na sādhunā karmaṇā bhūyān nātra vāsādhunā kaṇīyān eṣa bhūtādhipatiḥ eṣa lokeśvara eṣa loka-pālaḥ sa setur vidharaṇa eṣām lokānām asambhedāya*

“He is the Self, the dominator over all, the controller of all, the king of all. He rules over all. He is not made greater by pious work, nor lesser by impious work. He is the king of all that is. He is the master of the worlds. He is the protector of the worlds. He is the boundary so the worlds will not break apart.”

From this it may be understood that Brahman, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is different from the liberated *jīva*. Because it cannot be said that the liberated *jīva* has dominion over all or control over all, and because *Sūtra* 4.4.17 will say *jagad-vyāpāra-varjyam*: “The liberated *jīva* has not the power to create the universes,” the idea the Brahman and the liberated *jīva* are identical is refuted.

This idea is also refuted by the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, where it is said of Brahman:

*antaḥ praviṣṭaḥ śastā janānām*

“He is the controller in the living entities’ hearts.”

Neither can it be said that the difference between them is only because of the *jīva*’s identification with a material body, because the *śruti-śāstra* explains that the difference between them is present even after the *jīva* is liberated. In the *aṁśādhikaraṇa* of this book [2.3.41] we will refute the identification of *jīva* and Brahman in more detail.

The statement *ayam ātmā brahma*: “The self is Brahman,” simply means that the *jīva* has a small portion of Brahman’s qualities. The phrase *brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*: “Becoming Brahman, he attains Brahman,” should be understood to mean that the *jīva*, by attaining a portion of eight of Brahman’s qualities, becomes like Brahman. Because the *śruti-śāstra* says *paramaṁ sāmānam upaiti*: “He becomes like Brahman,” and because of the previous explanation of *brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti*, therefore the nature of Brahman is different from that of the liberated *jīva*.

In this proof that Brahman is different from the *jīva* in either conditioned or liberated states of existence, that the “sky” from which all names and forms have come is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and not the liberated *jīva*, is also proved. Any doubt that may have remained in spite of the statements of the *sūtras* *netaro ‘nupapatteḥ* [1.1.16] and *bheda-vyapadeśāc ca* [1.1.17] is dispelled by this proof that even at the time of liberation the *jīva* remains different from Brahman. Therefore there is no fault in the explanations given for these two [1.1.16 and 1.1.17] *sūtras*.

*Thus ends the Third Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!*

# Vedānta-sūtra

## Adhyāya 1, Pāda 4

### Some scriptural texts that may seem to describe the *jīvas* or some other topic actually describe the Supreme Brahman

*tamaḥ saṅkhya-ghanodīrṇa-vidīrṇaṁ yasya go-gaṇaiḥ  
taṁ samvid-bhūṣaṇaṁ kṛṣṇa-pūṣaṇaṁ samupāśmahe*

“Let us offer our respectful obeisances to the Kṛṣṇa-sun, which is decorated with transcendental knowledge, and which with its effulgence dispels the deep darkness of Sāṅkhya.”

### **Adhikaraṇa 1: The Avyakta in Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11 Refers to the Subtle Body and Not to Pradhāna**

*Viṣaya:* The Fourth Pāda of the First Adhyāya of *Śrī Vedānta-sūtra* begins with a refutation of the theory of creation held by atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy. They say that there is no need for God, and that the material nature and the actions of the *jīvas* are sufficient to explain the material creation. Atheistic theories of creation are nothing new; even 5,000 years ago when the *Vedānta-sūtras* were compiled, there was a need to refute such atheistic theories. A more detailed and thorough refutation of the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy will appear in Adhyāya 2, Pāda 1 of *Śrī Vedānta-sūtra*.

*Vedānta-sūtra*’s refutation of Sāṅkhya, Buddhism and other atheistic cosmogonies is well-known. The important point for the contemporary reader is that the same refutation applies equally well to modern so-called scientific theories of creation. Matter is inert. If we place a rock in the desert, we can come back after a day, a year, ten years or a millennium, and barring some event like an earthquake, the rock will remain exactly as we left it. Matter does not move itself; it requires some application of energy to animate it. Nor does matter possess any sort of intelligence; it blindly follows the applicable laws of physics. All theories excluding God or the transcendental world from consideration fail on this account: they cannot explain the initial injection of energy and intelligence into the system of the material world.

For example, all the variations of the currently popular ‘Big Bang’ theory assume that the material world possessed or generated its own energy. But even if the universe has its own energy, that energy originally had to come from some source. It must have a point of emanation, just like the sunlight radiates from the sun and electricity comes from the powerhouse. The materialistic scientists cannot explain how this took place. They cannot answer the simple question of how the matter of the universe went from the inert, unmanifested stage to the dynamic, energetic state we see it in today.

There is also the problem of the origin of the physical laws of the universe. Scientists have observed that the fundamental forces and physical constants of the universe have to be finely tuned to permit organic life to exist. The stability of many essential structures, from atomic nuclei to the whole universe, depends upon delicate balances among various fundamental forces and physical constants. For example, for life as we know it to exist, there must be atoms; and if any one of several fundamental physical constants were different by a small amounts, atoms could not exist.

As far as anyone can tell, the physical laws and constants are permanent features of the universe and are consistent everywhere. But how did these physical laws originate, how are they enforced, and how did they acquire values that guarantee favorable conditions for life? No one is prepared to argue that

the laws of physics evolved over time, for that would destroy the basis of all science: namely, that there are unchangeable physical laws and universal principles underlying all existence. If there is no chance to change or correct the laws of the universe, they had to be tuned properly from the very beginning of creation to permit the existence of life as we know it. Therefore for life to exist, the universal physical laws and constants could only have been designed by a sentient Creator with perfect intelligence and foreknowledge. This is the basic argument behind the theory of Intelligent Design.

Of course, the simple and correct answer to these difficulties is that both the original energy of the creation and the physical laws of the universe came from God. But the modern scientists are unreasonably biased against this simple, clear explanation. For example, the author of this frank statement is Professor Richard Lewontin of Harvard:

“We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, ... in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated commitment to materialism. ... we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.” [Lewontin, Richard, Review of the Demon-Haunted World, by Carl Sagan. In New York Review of Books, January 9, 1997.]

The scientists abuse the trust students naturally place in their highly educated college professors to propagate a false explanation of the creation, merely to forward the materialistic agenda of a world without a controller, without spirit:

“And I use that trust to effectively brainwash them. ... our teaching methods are primarily those of propaganda. We appeal—without demonstration—to evidence that supports our position. We only introduce arguments and evidence that supports [sic] the currently accepted theories and omit or gloss over any evidence to the contrary.” [Singham, Mark, "Teaching and Propaganda," Physics Today (vol. 53, June 2000), p. 54.]

These frank and cynical statements of prominent so-called scientists reveal that their atheistic mindset is not the result of careful, unbiased empirical investigation of nature, as they try to reassure us. Their thinking is not scientific at all. It is, instead, part of a broad, calculated strategy to disempower people in general by feeding them a view of the world that makes them appear weaker and less important than they really are. The materialists want people to believe that they are nothing but soulless bags of flesh in a world with no God, no right or wrong, and no continued existence or consequences for our present behavior after death. That explanation is just a cynical lie to make the innocent people easier to control and exploit by ruthless, amoral nation-states and corporations. They take advantage of the moral paralysis engendered by this destructive and toxic worldview to profit at the expense of the rest of the world. Hence the research funding controlled by the same governments and corporations goes to researchers and educators who support their atheistic agenda, and is withheld from programs with a theistic worldview.

An intelligent person demands conclusive proof for any theory. The conventional atheistic explanation of the creation has numerous deficiencies, but as evinced by the above quotes, the scientists collude to cover them up. Most people are intellectually lazy, and never bother to think through the explanations they are given for the creation of the world. The theories of theistic creation offered by most religious organizations are not very convincing because they lack a detailed description of the creation; nor do they know how to refute the materialistic explanation. But as soon as we understand the clear arguments of *Vedānta-sūtra* and the detailed descriptions of the creation contained in its natural commentary *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all doubts are destroyed. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives wonderful theistic explanations of all the difficulties of creation theory, especially the main problems of the

original energy and the origin of the physical laws outlined above. By studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, any actually intelligent person will certainly conclude that the Supreme Lord is the Designer and Creator of the universe.

*Vedānta-sūtra* philosophy calls this Creator of the universe the Supreme Brahman. It is He who created the laws of physics, generated the material of the universe, and injected the original impulse of creative energy to set it into motion. Then He entered into the creation as the Supersoul to direct the further development and activities of the living entities. No atheistic theory can explain these functions of the divine Creator; therefore the efforts of the materialistic theorists center on trying to avoid answering these questions: Where did the original material of the creation come from? What is the source of the original energy of the universe? How did the physical laws of the universe originate? Why are these laws favorable for the existence of life as we know it? What intelligence is responsible for the continued development and maintenance of the material universe?

Anyone who has been involved with a large, complex project such as building a house knows that the materials do not simply take their positions automatically; the energy and cooperation of many intelligent workers is required. For the project to be a success there must be an architect, a designer who plans everything; sufficient amounts and proper types of materials must be available; sufficient skilled labor to assemble the materials must be present; a competent manager must supervise the work; finally, continued upkeep and regular maintenance are required to prevent the finished product from decaying due to the influence of time, and keep it useful for its intended purpose. If these requirements apply to a house, a car or any other complex construction, how much more do they apply to the entire universe? Therefore an intelligent, energetic Creator must exist, and all attempts to explain the universe and life without such a Creator must fail.

Just as the universe and life as we know it cannot exist without an intelligent Creator, they cannot exist without the prior existence of the spiritual world. The space and time of the material universe do not exist before the creation; therefore before the material creation is brought into manifestation, there must be a continuum in which its dormant material and energetic ingredients, including the living entities, can exist in an unmanifest state. Since material time has a beginning and an end, the spiritual world must be eternal, or beyond material time. The spiritual world is also the abode of the Creator and contains His potencies, associates and eternal activities. The purpose of *Vedānta-sūtra* and indeed, all Vedic philosophy and practices, is to enable the conditioned living entities in the material world to transfer their existence to the spiritual world, where there is unending, perfect felicity in association with the Creator, the Supreme Brahman.

Previously the *sūtras* affirmed that the Supreme Brahman is He, the knowledge and realization of whom bring liberation, He who is the seed and material cause of the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the material universes, who is different from both the *jīvas* and dead matter, who possesses innumerable inconceivable potencies, who is all-knowing, who possesses all auspicious qualities, who is free from all inauspiciousness, who possesses unlimited opulences, and who is supremely pure. He is the ultimate answer to all questions regarding the mystery of the creation of the universe, and the miracles of life and consciousness.

Earlier in Pāda 3 we discussed *pradhāna*, the unmanifested stage of material nature. Now we will consider the theory that the *pradhāna* and the *pum* [individual living entities] together comprise all that exists, and there is no God separate from them. This theory is propounded in the *Kapila-tantra* and perhaps also seen in some branches of the *Vedas*. The followers of Sāṅkhya philosophy quote the following passage from *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.10-11]:

*indriyebhyaḥ parā hy arthā  
arthebhyaś ca param manaḥ*



*manasas tu parā buddhir  
buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ*

*mahataḥ param avyaktam  
avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ  
puruṣān na param kiñcit  
sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatīḥ*

“The sense-objects are higher than the senses. The mind is higher than the sense-objects. Intelligence is higher than the mind. The *mahat* is higher than the intelligence. The *avyakta* [the unmanifested] is higher than the *mahat*. The *puruṣa* [person] is higher than the unmanifested. Nothing is higher than the *puruṣa*. The *puruṣa* is the highest destination.”

*Samśaya*: The doubt here is whether the word *avyakta* [the unmanifested] refers to the *pradhāna* [the primordial stage of material nature] or the *śarīra* [the body].

*Pūrvapakṣa*: The opponent may answer this doubt by saying that because both *śruti* and *smṛti* give the sequence as first *mahat*, then *avyakta*, and then *puruṣa*, therefore the word *avyakta* here must refer to the *pradhāna*.

*Siddhānta*: Whether the word *avyakta* refers to *pradhāna* or *śarīra* is explained in the following *sūtra*.

### Sūtra 1.4.1

*anumānikam apy ekeṣām iti cen na śarīra-rūpaka-vinyasta-grhītair darśayati ca*

*anumānikam* – the inference; *apy* – even; *ekeṣām* – of some; *iti* – thus; *cen* – if; *na* – not; *śarīra* – the body; *rūpaka* – the metaphor; *vinyasta* – placed; *grhītair* – because of being accepted; *darśayati* – reveals; *ca* – and.

**If some assume [that the word *avyakta* in this passage of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* refers to the *pradhāna*], then I say “No. The fact that this passage is part of a metaphor referring to the body clearly shows [that the word *avyakta* here means *śarīra*].”**

The Kaṭhakas [those who study the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*] consider that the word *avyakta* here refers to the *pradhāna*. The opponent says: “The etymology of the word *avyakta* is ‘That which is not [a-] manifested [-*vyakta*]’. If this is so, then the word *avyakta* cannot mean anything except the *pradhāna* [unmanifested material nature].”

What is the answer to this objection? The answer is given in this *sūtra* in the phrase beginning with the word *śarīra*. Because it is employed in a passage where the body is compared to a chariot, the word *avyakta* here refers to the *śarīra* [body]. The passage preceding this mention of *avyakta*, which is a metaphor where the material body is considered to be a chariot, clearly shows this. The entire passage is given here:

“The individual is the passenger in the car of the material body, and the intelligence is the driver. Mind is the driving instrument, and the senses are the horses. The self is thus the enjoyer or sufferer in the association of the mind and senses. So it is understood by great thinkers. For a fool who does not control his mind, the senses are wild horses overwhelming the charioteer. For the wise man who controls his mind, the senses are good horses obedient to the charioteer. An impious fool who does not control his mind does not attain the spiritual world; he attains the world of repeated birth and death. A pious wise man who controls his mind attains the spiritual world. He never again takes birth. A person who has transcendental knowledge as a charioteer,

and who tightly holds the reins of the mind, attains the path's final destination: the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu. The sense objects are higher than the senses. The mind is higher than the sense-objects. Intelligence is higher than the mind. The *mahat* [material nature] is higher than the intelligence. The *avyakta* [the unmanifested] is higher than the *mahat*. The *puruṣa* [person] is higher than the unmanifested. Nothing is higher than the *puruṣa*. The *puruṣa* is the highest destination. That Self is hidden within all beings and does not shine forth; but He is seen by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellects. A wise man should control speech and knowledge; he should keep his consciousness within the Self, which is the Great, and he should keep the Great within the Self, which is the Quiet.” [Kāṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.3-13]

Here the devotee who desires to attain the abode of Lord Viṣṇu is described as the passenger in a chariot. His body and other possessions are described as a chariot with its various parts. The traveller who keeps the chariot and its parts under control attains the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu; one who fails to control his mind and senses attains only the misery of continued material existence. After this passage, the *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* continues to explain how the body and its various parts, which are metaphorically considered a chariot and its parts, are more or less difficult to control. In the metaphor of the chariot in the above passage, the senses and other adjuncts of the body are described as horses or other adjuncts of the chariot. The *Upaniṣad* continues this discussion in the same terms. Of the several things mentioned in the previous verses, only the body itself is not listed in the subsequent verses, and therefore the single ambiguous item *avyakta* must refer to the *śarīra* [body] by default. In the metaphorical description of the chariot in *śloka*s 1-9 of the passage quoted above, we have the following entities:

Entity	Metaphor
<i>śarīra</i> [body]	chariot
<i>buddhi</i> [reason, intelligence]	charioteer
<i>manas</i> [mind]	reins
<i>arthas</i> [sense objects]	roads
<i>indriyas</i> [senses]	horses

Now comparing the terms of this metaphor with the words of the passage under discussion, only the body is left out, therefore the word *avyakta* must refer to the body, by process of elimination. The same metaphor is expressed in the passage under discussion, showing how the senses are easier to control than the sense objects, the mind and intelligence. Therefore a wise man simply controls the senses, and the rest are controlled automatically because the chariot, or body, is the main entity and the others are the more subtle adjuncts of the body.

The interpretation of *avyakta* as *pradhāna* is also disproved because the contents of the passage quoted above and the following verses of the *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* disagree with the tenets of Sāṅkhya philosophy. The Sāṅkhya philosophy does not accept that the sense objects are the cause of the senses, or that mind is higher than the sense objects.

There are many similar passages in the Vedic literature. We find a similar description of the hierarchy of the senses, mind etc. in *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.42]:

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur  
indriyebhyaḥ param manaḥ  
manasas tu parā buddhir  
yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ*

“The working senses are superior to dull matter; mind is higher than the senses; intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he [the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.”

*ekāyano 'sau dvi-phalas tri-mūlāś  
catū-rasaḥ pañca-vidhaḥ ṣaḍ-ātmā  
sapta-tvag aṣṭa-viṭapo navākṣo  
daśa-cchadī dvi-khago hy ādi-vrkṣaḥ*

“The body [the total body and the individual body are of the same composition] may figuratively be called ‘the original tree.’ From this tree, which fully depends on the ground of material nature, come two kinds of fruit—the enjoyment of happiness and the suffering of distress. The cause of the tree, forming its three roots, is association with the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. The fruits of bodily happiness have four tastes—religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation—which are experienced through five senses for acquiring knowledge in the midst of six circumstances: lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst. The seven layers of bark covering the tree are skin, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and semen, and the eight branches of the tree are the five gross and three subtle elements—earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego. The tree of the body has nine hollows—the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the rectum and the genitals—and ten leaves, the ten airs passing through the body. In this tree of the body there are two birds: one is the individual soul, and the other is the Supersoul.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.2.27]

*īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām  
hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati  
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni  
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*

“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine made of the material energy.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.61]

The subtlety of the Sāṅkhya argument is not due to its refinement; it is because the *Vedas* never directly state anywhere that *pradhāna* is the cause of creation. Rather, they always state that the Supreme Brahman is the real cause, and *pradhāna* is only a secondary cause. Thus to gain support for their atheistic theory, the Sāṅkhyas are forced to rely on indirect references taken out of context. The descriptions of the causal relationship between the Lord and material nature given in the *Vedas* are clear:

*pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ*

“The Supreme Lord as the Supersoul is the chief knower of the body and the master of *pradhāna* [the unmanifested three modes of material nature].” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.16]

*kāla-vṛttyā tu māyāyām  
guṇa-mayyām adhokṣajāḥ*

*puruṣeṇātma-bhūtena  
vīryam ādhatta vīryavān*

“The Supreme Living Being in His feature as the transcendental *puruṣa* incarnation, who is the Lord's plenary expansion, impregnates the material nature of three modes, and thus by the influence of eternal time the living entities appear.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.26]

*prakṛter guṇa-sāmyasya  
nirviśeṣasya mānavi  
ceṣṭā yataḥ sa bhagavān  
kāla ity upalakṣitaḥ*

“My dear mother, O daughter of Svāyambhuva Manu, as I have explained, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the time factor, from whom the creation begins as a result of the agitation of the neutral, unmanifested nature.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.17]

*tato 'bhavan mahat-tattvam  
avyaktāt kāla-coditāt  
vijñānātmāma-deha-sthaṁ  
viśvaṁ vyañjams tamo-nudaḥ*

“Thereafter, influenced by the interactions of eternal time, the supreme sum total of matter called the *mahat-tattva* became manifested, and in this *mahat-tattva* the unalloyed goodness, the Supreme Lord, sowed the seeds of universal manifestation out of His own body.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.27]

*bhūtānām nabha-ādīnām  
yad yad bhavyāvarāvaram  
teṣāṁ parānusaṁsargād  
yathā saṅkhyāṁ guṇān viduḥ*

“O gentle one, of all the physical elements, beginning from the sky down to the earth, all the inferior and superior qualities are due only to the final touch of the glance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.37]

*daivena durvitarkyeṇa  
pareṇānimiṣeṇa ca  
jāta-kṣobhād bhagavato  
mahān āsīd guṇa-trayāt*

“When the equilibrium of the combination of the three modes of nature was agitated by the unseen activity of the living entity, by Mahā-Viṣṇu and by the force of time, the total material elements were produced.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.20.12]

*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ*

“This material nature is working under My direction.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.10]

So the Vedic scriptures assert again and again that the material energy is incapable of manifesting the creation without the transcendental glance of the Supreme.

Now the following objection may be raised: “The body is clearly manifest. How is it that in this passage it is described as unmanifest?” To answer this doubt the author says:

## Sūtra 1.4.2

*sūkṣmaṁ tu tad-arhatvāt*

*sūkṣmaṁ* – subtle; *tu* – certainly; *tad-arhatvāt* – because of appropriateness.

**[The word *śarīra* here] certainly [means the] subtle [body] because that is appropriate [in this context.]**

The word *tu* [certainly] is used here to dispel doubt. The word *śarīra* here means *sūkṣma-śarīra* [the subtle body]. Why? Because that meaning is appropriate. It is appropriate to describe the *sūkṣma-śarīra* as *avyakta* [unmanifest]. The quote from *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [1.4.7] says *tad dhedaṁ tarhy avyākṛtaṁ āsīt*: “Then there was the unmanifested.” This shows that before the gross material universe was manifested, the living force was present. This shows that the word *avyakta* [unmanifested] is appropriate to describe the subtle body. For example, the word *vyaktāvyaktaṁ* in the following *śloka* means “the gross and subtle bodies”:

*labdhvā nimittam avyaktaṁ  
vyaktāvyaktaṁ bhavaty uta  
yathā-yoni yathā-bījaṁ  
svabhāvena balīyasā*

“The fruitive activities a living being performs, whether pious or impious, are the unseen cause for the fulfillment of his desires. This unseen cause is the root for the living entity’s gross and subtle bodies. Because of his intense desire, the living entity takes birth in a particular family and receives a body which is either like that of his mother or like that of his father. The gross and subtle bodies are created according to his desire.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.54]

The objection may be raised: “If the original cause is subtle, then why should that subtle cause not be described as the *pradhāna* [unmanifested material nature] of the Sāṅkhya theory?” To answer this doubt he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.3

*tad-adhīnatvād arthavat*

*tad* – on Him; *adhīnatvād* – because of dependence; *arthavat* – possessing the meaning.

**[This meaning should be accepted] because [the *pradhāna* is ultimately] dependent on Him [the Supreme Brahman].**

The meaning here is that the creative actions of *pradhāna* are not the original cause, but are themselves caused by the Supreme Brahman. *Pradhāna* is ultimately dependent on the Supreme Brahman, the original cause of all causes, because *pradhāna* is naturally inactive. It only acts when inspired by the glance of Brahman. This is described in the following statements of Vedic literature.

*māyāṁ tu prakṛtiṁ vidyān māyinaṁ tu maheśvaram*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is a magician, and the material world is His magical show.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.10]

*asmān māyī srjate viśvam etat*

“The master of Māyā creates this world.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.9]

*ya eka varṇo bahudhā śakti-yogād varṇān anekān nihitārtho dadhāti*

“He who has no rival creates the varieties of this world, using His own potencies according to His own wish.” [Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.1]

*sa eva bhūyo nija-vīrya-coditaṁ  
sva-jīva-māyāṁ prakṛtiṁ sisṛkṣatīm  
anāma-rūpātmani rūpa-nāmanī  
vidhitsuṁ nūna ‘nūnaśāstra-kṛt*

“The Personality of Godhead, again desiring to give names and forms to His parts and parcels, the living entities, placed them under the guidance of material nature. By His own potency, material nature is empowered to re-create.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.10.22]

*pradhānaṁ puruṣaṁ cāpi  
praviśyātmecchayā hariḥ  
kṣobhayāṁ āsa samprāpte  
sarga-kāle vyāvṛtyau*

“At the time of creation Lord Hari enters the changing *pradhāna* and the unchanging living souls, and agitates them according to His wish.” [Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

*mayādhyākṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ  
sūyate sa-carācaram  
hetunānena kaunteya  
jagad viparivartate*

“The material nature, which is one of My energies, is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, producing all moving and non-moving beings. Under its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again.” [Bhagavad-gītā 9.10]

We do not accept the Sāṅkhya theory because it considers *pradhāna* the original, independent cause of all causes, whereas the Vedic literature clearly states that the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original cause.

*yasmin yato yena ca yasya yasmai  
yad yo yathā kurute kāryate ca  
parāvareṣūṁ paramaṁ prāk prasiddham  
tad brahma tad dhetur ananyad ekam*

“The Supreme Brahman, Kṛṣṇa, is the ultimate resting place and source of everything. Everything is done by Him, everything belongs to Him, and everything is offered to Him. He is the ultimate objective, and whether acting or causing others to act, He is the ultimate doer. There are many causes, high and low, but since He is the cause of all causes, He is well known as the Supreme Brahman who existed before all activities. He is one without a second and has no other cause. I therefore offer my respects unto Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.4.30]

In the next *sūtra*, the author gives another reason for holding that *avyakta* is not to be interpreted as *pradhāna*.

## Sūtra 1.4.4

*jñeyatvāvacanatvāc ca*

*jñeyatva* – the state of being the object of knowledge; *avacanatvāt* – because of non-description; *ca* – and.

**[The *avyakta* of this passage is not described] as the object of knowledge. This is another reason [for not interpreting this *avyakta* to be *pradhāna*.]**

Claiming that liberation is obtained by understanding the difference between the the spiritual living entity, or soul and the modes of material nature, the Sāṅkhya theorists claim that one should know the real nature of *pradhāna* in order to obtain certain powers. Because this passage from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* in no way describes any of this, the word *avyakta* here cannot refer to the *pradhāna* of the Sāṅkhyas. Actual mystic power is to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the master of *pradhāna*:

*kālenātmānubhāvena sāmyaṁ nītāsu śaktiṣu  
sattvādiṣv ādi-puruṣaḥ pradhāna-puruṣeśvaraḥ*

*parāvarāṇām parama āste kaivalya-saṁjñitaḥ  
kevalānubhavānanda-sandoho nirupādhikaḥ*

“When the Supreme Personality of Godhead displays His own potency in the form of time and guides His material potencies, such as the mode of goodness, into a neutral condition of equilibrium, He remains as the supreme controller of that neutral state, called *pradhāna*, as well as of the living entities. He is also the supreme worshipable object for all beings, including liberated souls, demigods and ordinary conditioned souls. The Lord is eternally free from any material designation, and He constitutes the totality of spiritual bliss, which one experiences by seeing the Lord's spiritual form. The Lord thus exhibits the fullest meaning of the word ‘liberation.’ ” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.9.17-18]

## **Sūtra 1.4.5**

*vadatīti cen na prājñō hi prakaraṇāt*

*vadati* – says; *iti* – thus; *cet* – if; *na* – no; *prājñō* – the omniscient Paramātmā; *hi* – indeed; *prakaraṇāt* – because of reference.

**If someone says [“This passage does describe *pradhāna* in this way”] then I say no. That statement refers to the omniscient Personality of Godhead.**

Someone may object: “Your contention that the word *avyakta* in this passage of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* cannot refer to *pradhāna* because the *avyakta* here is not described as the object of knowledge has in no way been proved. *Pradhāna* is described in this way in the very next verse [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.15]:

*aśabdam asparsam arūpam avyayam  
tathā-rasam nityam agandhavac ca yat  
anādy anantaṁ mahataḥ paraṁ dhruvaṁ  
nicāyā taṁ mṛtyu-mukhāt pramucyate*

“By meditating on the soundless, touchless, formless, unchanging, tasteless, eternal, fragranceless, beginningless, endless, Supreme Great, one becomes free from the mouth of death.”

“If these words do not describe *pradhāna* as the ultimate object of knowledge, then what do they describe?”

To this objection I reply: These words describe the omniscient Personality of Godhead. They are an appropriate description of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, about whom the following words are said:

*puruṣān na param kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatih*

“Nothing is higher than the Supreme Person. The Supreme Person is the highest.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.11]

*eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu gūḍhātmā na prakāśate*

“Hiding in the hearts of all beings, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not openly manifest.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.3.12]

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains how the manifested material nature and sense objects merge into the Supreme at the time of universal annihilation:

“At the time of annihilation, the mortal body of the living being becomes merged into food. Food merges into the grains, and the grains merge back into the earth. The earth merges into its subtle sensation, fragrance. Fragrance merges into water, and water further merges into its own quality, taste. That taste merges into fire, which merges into form. Form merges into touch, and touch merges into ether. Ether finally merges into the sensation of sound. The senses all merge into their own origins, the presiding demigods, and they, O gentle Uddhava, merge into the controlling mind, which itself merges into false ego in the mode of goodness. Sound becomes one with false ego in the mode of ignorance, and all-powerful false ego, the first of all the physical elements, merges into the total nature. The total material nature, the primary repository of the three basic modes, dissolves into the modes. These modes of nature then merge into the unmanifest form of nature, and that unmanifest form merges into time. Time merges into the Supreme Lord, present in the form of the omniscient Mahā-puruṣa, the original activator of all living beings. That origin of all life merges into the unborn Supreme Soul, who remains alone, established within Himself. It is from Him that all creation and annihilation are manifested.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.24.22-27]

Therefore He alone is the Supreme Great, and the cause and source of everything else, including *pradhāna*. To further explain that the word *avyakta* does not refer to *pradhāna* he says:

### Sūtra 1.4.6

*trayāṇām eva caivam upanyāsaḥ praśnaś ca*

*trayāṇām* – of the three; *eva* – indeed; *ca* – certainly; *evam* – in this way; *upanyāsaḥ* – mention; *praśnaś* – question; *ca* – and.

**In this context three questions certainly are mentioned.**

The word *ca* [certainly] here is meant to remove doubt. In this passage of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* only three questions are asked. They are:

1. Naciketa’s request that his father be kind to him
2. His request for celestial fire
3. His desire to know the true nature of the self



Nothing else is asked, and so it would have been irrelevant for the teacher to have given teachings on *pradhāna*. There is no mention of *pradhāna* because there was no inquiry about it.

## Sūtra 1.4.7

*mahadvac ca*

*mahat* – the *mahat*; *vat* – like; *ca* – also.

**This usage is like the usage of the word *mahat*.**

Because the word *mahān* in the phrase *buddher ātmā mahān paraḥ*: “The Great Self is higher than the intelligence,” is never taken to mean the *mahat-tattva* [material nature] of the Sāṅkhya theory, in the same way the *avyakta* [unmanifested] mentioned here to be higher than this *mahat* should not be taken to mean the *pradhāna* of Sāṅkhya.

Thus, the attempt of the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophers to misinterpret the ambiguous word *avyakta* in the passage of *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* is baseless, and relies on taking the word out of context and reading in a meaning that was never intended. The atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophers cannot depend on the support of the Vedic literature, because the real import of the *Vedas* is that the Lord alone is the supreme cause of the creation and everything else. Similarly, the atheistic material scientists of today want to prove that the creation comes from nothing, without any other cause but itself. But they cannot explain how the inert matter of the universe originates, nor where the energy and laws of the universe come from. Because they are averse to God and intent on material exploitation, they manufacture so many bogus theories and mislead the people in general. But anyone who understands Vedic philosophy can easily defeat all their arguments by insisting on sensible answers to these simple questions.

## ***Adhikaraṇa 2: The Ajā of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.5 Does Not Mean Pradhāna***

*Viśaya*: Another wrong theory of the Sāṅkhya philosophers is refuted in this Adhikaraṇa. The impersonalists do not follow any strict principle in interpreting the Vedic texts. They freely use the primary or secondary meanings of words, and the direct meaning or metaphorical interpretation of phrases, without any regard to contextual considerations, as long as it supports their preconceptions. They sometimes even create entirely new meanings for words based on etymological analysis of their roots. Thus their interpretation of the scriptures is only speculation, but it serves to confuse the layman as to the actual intent of scriptural passages.

The Vedic literature is not ordinary writing, but the Absolute Truth or sacred revelation of God; therefore it should not be interpreted whimsically or in a doctrinaire sectarian manner. To do so is not only a breach of scholarly ethics, but also blocks our only opportunity to receive definitive information of the inconceivable world of transcendence. For the all-perfect *Vedas* are originally spoken by the the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, also an incarnation of the Lord.

*śrī-nārada uvāca*

*namas tasmai bhagavate*

*kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye*

*yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām*

*abhavāyośatīḥ kalāḥ*

Śrī Nārada said: “I offer My obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests His all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings can achieve liberation.”

*ity ādyam ṛṣim ānamya  
tac-chiṣyāṁś ca mahātmanah  
tato 'gād āśramam sākṣāt  
pitur dvaipāyanasya me*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] “After saying this, Nārada bowed down to Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the foremost of sages, and also to His saintly disciples. He then returned to the hermitage of my father, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.

*sabhājito bhagavatā  
kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ  
tasmai tad varṇayām āsa  
nārāyaṇa-mukhāc chrutam*

“Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, respectfully greeted Nārada Muni and offered him a seat, which he accepted. Nārada then described to Vyāsa what he had heard from the mouth of Śrī Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi.

*ity etad varṇitam rājan  
yan naḥ praśnaḥ kṛtas tvayā  
yathā brahmany anirdeśye  
nīrguṇe 'pi manaś caret*

“Thus I have replied to the question You asked me, O King, concerning how the mind can have access to the Absolute Truth, which is indescribable by material words and devoid of material qualities.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.87.46-49]

Therefore the Vedic literatures compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva are the direct words of the the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Vyāsadeva gives definitive information on the meaning of certain disputed passages of the Vedic literature in this section of the *Vedānta-sūtras*. For example, the following is quoted from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [4.5]:

*ajām ekām lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇām  
bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānām sarūpāḥ  
ajo hy eko juṣamāno 'nuśete  
jahaty enaṁ bhukta-bhogam ajo 'nyaḥ*

“A certain unborn male serves the red, white and black unborn female that creates the many living entities and their forms, while another another unborn male abandons her as she enjoys pleasures.”

*Samśaya:* Does the word *ajā* here mean the *pradhāna* of *saṅkhya*, or does it mean the potency of Brahman described in this *Upaniṣad*?

*Pūrva-pakṣa:* The unborn material nature creates the innumerable living entities without any external help.

*Siddhānta:* In regard to the Saṅkhyas’ belief concerning the creation, he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.8

*camasavad aviśeṣāt*

*camasa* – a cup; *vat* – like; *aviśeṣāt* – because of not being specific.

**[The word *ajā* in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.5 does not mean the Sāṅkhya conception of material nature] because of the lack of a specific description. It is not like the word *camasa* [cup] [in *Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.3.]**

The word *na* [not] should be read into this *sūtra* from *Sūtra* 1.4.5. It cannot be said that the female described here is the material nature as described in the *Sāṅkhya-smṛti*. Why? Because the material nature is not specifically described in this passage. There is no specific description, but only the mention of being unborn in the word *ajā*, which is derived from the phrase *na jāyate* [it is not born].

It is not like the example of the cup in the *Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* [2.2.3] where it is said:

*arvāg-bilāś camasa ūrdhva-budhna...*

“There is a cup with its mouth down and its bottom up. Manifold glory has been placed within it. On its lip the seven Ṛṣis sit; the tongue as the eighth communicates with Brahman. What is called a cup with its mouth down and its bottom up is this head, for its mouth is below and its bottom [the skull] is above. When it is said that manifold glory has been placed within it, the senses are that manifold glory. When he says that the seven Ṛṣis sit on its lip, the Ṛṣis are the active senses. And when he says that the tongue as the eighth Ṛṣi communicates with Brahman, it is because the tongue does communicate with Brahman [by chanting *mantras* and prayers].”

It is not possible to take the word *camasa*, which is derived from the verb *cam* [to drink], in this *mantra* as literally a cup, or vessel used to consume what was offered in a *yajña*. It is not possible because one must consider the meaning of a word not only with reference to its etymology, but also considering the principles of *samanvaya* or interpretation according to context, as described in the Introduction to this work. For the reason of lack of supporting context, it is not possible to interpret the word *ajā* in the passage under discussion as the material nature described in the *Sāṅkhya-smṛti*. It is also not possible because the *Sāṅkhya-smṛti* considers that material nature creates the living entities independently, and there is nothing in this passage to support that concept.

The *ajā* here is the potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is described in the *Vedas*. Giving a specific reason to accept this, he says:

## **Sūtra 1.4.9**

*jyotir upakramā tu tathā hy adhīyate eke*

*jyotiḥ* – light; *upakramā* – beginning with; *tu* – indeed; *tathā* – in that way; *hi* – indeed; *adhīyate* – I read; *eke* – some.

**Light is its origin. Also, other passages confirm it.**

The word *tu* [but] is used in the sense of certainty. The word *jyotiḥ* [light] in the *sūtra* means the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is celebrated as light in the *śruti-śāstra* [*Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 10.4.16]:

*tad devā jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ*

“The demigods meditate on Him, the light of lights.”

The word *upakrama* should be understood here in the sense of “cause”. Because this *ajā* [unborn] has Brahman as its cause, its being unborn is metaphorical only, just as the “cup” in *Brhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 2.2.3 discussed in the previous *sūtra*. In that passage it is said:

*arvāg-bilaś camasa ūrdhva-budhna*

“There is a cup with its mouth down and its bottom up.”

As the “cup” here is actually the skull, in the same way the *ajā* [unborn] here is not actually unborn, but is the potency born from Brahman, as is described in the first and fourth chapters of *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*. The first quote is [*Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* 1.3]:

*te dhyāna-yogānugata apaśyan  
devātma-śaktiṁ sva-guṇair nigūḍhām*

“The *dhyāna-yogīs* saw the Supreme Lord’s potency, which was hidden by its own qualities. He, being one, superintends all these causes, time, self, and the rest.”

The second quote is [*Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* 4.1]:

*ya eka-varṇo bahudhā śakti-yogāt*

“He [the Lord] who is one has become many by the touch of His potency.”

Then the author gives another reason in the *sūtra*’s words *tathā hi*. *Hi* in this context means “reason”. The reason is the evidence given in other passages [*adhīyate eke*]. That the material nature is born from the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also explained in the following passage [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.9]:

*tasmād etad brahma nāma rūpam annam ca jāyate*

“From Him [the Lord], *pradhāna*, names, forms, and food, are all born.”

The word *brahma* here means *pradhāna*, which is situated in the three modes of nature, and which is also called *brahma* in *Bhagavad-gita* [14.3]:

*mama yonir mahad brahma*

“The total material substance, called Brahman, is the source of birth.”

Now our opponent may ask: “How, then, is the material nature unborn? Then, if it is unborn, how can it be born from light?”

Fearing that these questions may be raised, he says:

## **Sūtra 1.4.10**

*kalpanopadeśāc ca madhv-ādi-vad avirodhaḥ*

*kalpana* – creation; *upadeśāt* – from the instruction; *ca* – certainly; *madhv* – honey; *ādi* – beginning with; *vad* – like; *avirodhaḥ* – not a contradiction.

**Because it is said to be created by the Supreme, it is not a contradiction to say that *pradhāna* is both created and uncreated. In this way its is like honey and some other things [that are both created and uncreated.]**

This doubt is dispelled by the word *ca* [certainly]. It is possible for *pradhāna* to be both created and uncreated. How is that? That is explained by the word *kalpana*. *Kalpana* here means “creation”. It should be understood in that way because it was used with that sense in the *R̥g Veda*’s statement, *yathā-pūrvam akalpayat*: “In the beginning the Supreme Personality of Godhead created the world.” The

meaning of this is that the *pradhāna* is manifested from the Supreme Brahman, who is the master of the potencies of darkness.

That is the truth in this matter. The Lord has an eternal and very subtle potency named *tamas* [darkness], which is described in the following statement [*Rg Veda* 10.1.29.3]:

*tama āsīt tamasā gūḍham agre praketaṁ yadā tamas tan na divā na rātriḥ*

“In the beginning was darkness. Darkness covered everything. When the darkness was manifested there was neither day nor night.”

*Tamas* is also described in the *Culika Upaniṣad*:

*gaur anādvatī*

“Matter has no power to speak.”

At the time of cosmic annihilation *pradhāna* attains oneness with Brahman, but does not merge into Brahman. In the passage from *śruti-śāstra* beginning with the words *pṛthivy apsu pralīyate* it is said that the material elements, beginning from earth and culminating in ether, all merge into *tamas* [darkness], but there is no mention of *tamas* merging into another substance because *tamas* is already one with the Supreme. Because *tamas* is very subtle there is no possibility of it being separate from the Supreme, and therefore it is one with Him. It is not otherwise. This does not mean that *tamas* is identical with the Supreme. If it meant identity with the Supreme the use of the *pratyaya cvi* in *ekī-bhavati*, would not be appropriate.

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of the *tamas* potency, desires to create, from Him arises the unmanifested [*avyakta*] three modes of material nature. The *śruti-śāstra* explains:

*mahān avyakte līyate avyaktam akṣare akṣaram tamasi*

“The *mahat* merges into the *avyakta*, the *avyakta* merges into the *akṣara*, and the *akṣara* merges into *tamas*.”

The *Mahābhārata* explains,

*tasmād avyaktam utpannam tri-guṇam dvija-sattama*

“O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, the unmanifested three modes of material nature were born from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

These passages from scripture clearly describe the creation of *pradhāna* and the other elements. In this way the scriptures teach that *pradhāna* is created and that it is both cause and effect simultaneously. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* explains this in the following words:

*pradhāna-puṁsor ajayoḥ  
kāraṇam kārya-bhūtayoh*

“Lord Viṣṇu is the cause of the unborn *pradhāna* and *puruṣa*.”

At the time of creation the three modes of material nature arise in *pradhāna* and *pradhāna* manifests many different names, such as *pradhāna-avyakta*, and many different forms in red and other colors. At this time it is said that the *pradhāna* is manifested from the Supreme Light [*jyotir-utpannā*].

Next he [the author of the *sutras*] gives an example: “It is like honey and other similar things [*madhv-ādi-vat*].” The sun, when it is a cause, remains one, and when it is an effect it becomes other things, such as the honey enjoyed by the Vasus. In this way the sun is both cause and effect simultaneously. There is no contradiction in this.

Thus we see that the interpretation of the Vedic scriptures is an extremely subtle matter, requiring not only great scholarship and integrity but also complete faithfulness to the revelation of the Supreme Brahman, which is the actual subject matter of all the Vedic scriptures. The history of the Vedic knowledge is that the the Supreme Personality of Godhead impregnated it within Brahmā, the first created being in the universe, and then Brahmā distributed the Vedic knowledge to his sons and disciples. Brahmā was inspired by the Lord to receive this transcendental knowledge as it directly descends from the Lord. The *Vedas* are therefore called *apauruṣeya*, or not imparted by any created being. The Lord and the transcendental world alone existed before the creation [*nārāyaṇaḥ paro 'vyaktāt*], and therefore the words spoken by the Lord are vibrations of transcendental sound.

There is a gulf of difference between the two qualities of sound, namely *prākṛta* and *aprākṛta* or material and transcendental. The materialists like the Sāṅkhya philosophers and others can deal only with *prākṛta* sound, or sound vibrated in the material sky, because their consciousness is limited to the manifested material nature. Therefore we must know that the transcendental sound vibrations recorded in the symbolic expressions of the *Vedas* cannot be understood by anyone within the material universe unless and until he is inspired by the chain of disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsa and so on, as described above. No mundane scholar can translate or reveal the true import of the Vedic *mantras*. They cannot be understood unless one is inspired or initiated by the authorized spiritual master. The original spiritual master is the Lord Himself, and the succession comes down through the sources of *paramparā*, as clearly stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* [4.2]:

*evam paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ*

“This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.”

So unless one receives the transcendental knowledge from the authorized *paramparā*, even though he may be greatly qualified in the mundane advancements of arts or science, his speculative interpretation of the Vedic sound vibration should be considered useless.

### ***Adhikaraṇa 3: Pañca-pañca-janāḥ in Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.17 Does Not Refer to the 25 Elements of Sāṅkhya***

*Viśaya:* The Sāṅkhya philosophers analyze this material world into twenty-four elements, and they place the individual soul as the twenty-fifth item. According to their philosophy the 25 *tattvas* of the material creation are as follows:

1		<i>prakṛti</i>	Material nature
2		<i>puruṣa</i>	Soul
3		<i>mahat-tattva</i>	Great principle
4		<i>ahaṅkāra</i>	False ego
5		<i>manas</i>	Mind
6	<i>tan-mātrā</i> (subtle sense objects)	<i>śravāṁsi</i>	Sound
7		<i>ākṛti</i>	Form

8		<i>sparsā</i>	Touch
9		<i>rasa</i>	Flavor
10		<i>gandha</i>	Aroma
11	<i>jñāna-indriya</i> (knowledge-acquiring senses)	<i>śrotram</i>	Hearing
12		<i>tvak</i>	Touch
13		<i>dr̥k</i>	Sight
14		<i>rasana</i>	Taste
15		<i>nāsikāḥ</i>	Smell
16	<i>karma-indriya</i> (working senses)	<i>rasanām</i>	Tongue
17		<i>karau</i>	Hands
18		<i>pādau</i>	Feet
19		<i>prajananam</i>	Genital
20		<i>apānaḥ</i>	Anus
21	Material elements	<i>ākāśa</i>	Ether (space)
22		<i>vāyu</i>	Air
23		<i>agni</i>	Fire
24		<i>apas</i>	Water
25		<i>pr̥thvī</i>	Earth

The Sāṅkhya philosophers are desperate to find support for their atheistic views from the theistic Vedic literatures. So even though the purport of the *Vedas* completely contradicts their philosophy, any time they see even a glimpse of a reference to their thinking, they pounce on it and hold it up as a supporting statement, even though it is actually a mirage, like a lake seen in the desert. For example the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.17 explains:

*yasmin pañca-pañca-janā*  
*ākāśās ca pratiṣṭhitāḥ tam eva manya ātmānam*  
*vidvān brahmāmṛto 'mṛtam*

“I, who am immortal spirit, meditate on the Supreme Brahman, in whom the ether element and the *pañca-pañca-jana* rest.”

*Samśaya*: Do the words *pañca-pañca-jana* refer to the 25 elements described in the Kapila-tantra, or to some five other things?

*Pūrvapakṣa*: Because *pañca-pañca* is a *bahuvrīhi-samāsa* and *pañca-pañca-janāḥ* is a *karmadhāraya-samāsa*, the word *pañca-pañca-janāḥ* refers to the 25 elements described by Kapila. Somehow the two elements *ātmā* and *ākāśa* are here added to the list of elements. The word *jana* here means *tattva* [elements].

*Siddhānta*: He says:

### Sūtra 1.4.11

*na saṅkhyopasaṅgrahād api nānā-bhāvād atirekāc ca*

*na* – not; *saṅkhyā* – of numbers; *upasaṅgrahāt* – because of enumeration; *api* – even; *nānā* – various; *bhāvāt* – states; *atirekāt* – because of going beyond; *ca* – and.

**Even though they give the same numbers as the Sāṅkhya theory, these words do not refer to the Sāṅkhya theory because the the numbers here actually exceed Sāṅkhya numbers and because the elements of Sāṅkhya are variegated [and not grouped into five groups of five].**

The word *api* [even] here is used in the sense of “even if we consider for a moment this view.” By noting that the number here is the same number as the Sāṅkhya elements does not prove that *pañca-pañca-jana* refers to the Sāṅkhya elements. Why? The answer is given in the words beginning *nānā-bhāvāt*. Because the variegated Sāṅkhya elements are not divided into five groups of five, it is not possible to accept the 5 x 5 here as referring to the 25 Sāṅkhya elements. Also, the addition of *ātmā* and *ākāśa* brings the number up to 27. Simply by hearing the word *pañca* [five] twice, one should not be bewildered into thinking these two fives refer to the 25 elements of the Sāṅkhya theory.

Someone may ask, “What is your interpretation of *pañca-pañca-jana*?” The word *pañca-jana* is the name of a group, just as the word *saptarṣi* [the seven sages] is the name of a group. This is explained by Pāṇini [*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.1.50] in the words *dik-saṅkhye saṁjñāyām*: “Words indicating direction or number may be compounded with another word in the same case.” As each of the *saptarṣis* may be called *saptarṣi*, in the same way there may be five *pañca-janas*, each of whom may be called a *pañca-jana*, and all the *pañca-janas* together may be called the five *pañca-janas*. In this way the meaning of the word *pañca-jana* is very clear.

Who or what actually are these *pañca-janas*? To answer this question he says:

### Sūtra 1.4.12

*prānādayo vākya-śeṣāt*

*prāṇa* – breath; *ādayaḥ* – beginning with; *vākya* – of the statement; *śeṣāt* – from the remainder.

**[The *pañca-janas* here are five things] beginning with *prāṇa* [breath], as is clear from the words immediately following the mention of *pañca-jana*.**

The five things beginning with *prāṇa* are described in the following words [*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.18]:



*prānasya prāṇam uta cakṣuṣaś cakṣur uta śrotrasya śrotram annasyānnaṁ manaso ye mano viduḥ*

“They know the breath of breath, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the food of food, the mind of the mind.”

The objection may be raised: “The word *annam* [food] here is included in the Madhyandina recension of the *Upaniṣad* but not in the Kaṇva recension. In the Kaṇva recension, then, there are only four items and not five.”

To answer this doubt he says:

### **Sūtra 1.4.13**

*jyotiṣaikaṣāṁ asaty anne*

*jyotiṣā* – by light; *ekeṣāṁ* – of some; *asaty* – in the absence; *anne* – of food.

**In some versions [the Kaṇva recension] the word *jyotiḥ* [light] replaces the word *anna* [food].**

In the version of the Kaṇvas, even though the word *anna* is missing, the addition of the word *jyotiḥ* brings the number up to five. This word *jyotiḥ* is found in *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.6 in the words *tad devā jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ*: “The demigods worship Him, the light of lights.” The word *jyotiḥ* appears here in both recensions and it should be counted among the five or not as is appropriate.

Because the Sāṅkhya philosophy does not accept the Vedic version that the the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the root cause of all causes of the material creation and everything else, it is useless for them to seek confirmation from the *Vedas*. The entire Vedic literature is staunchly theistic, as the many quotations presented in this work affirm. It is simply not the case that certain sections of the *Vedas* support the idea that material nature is independent of the control of the Lord. The *sūtras* of *Vedānta* systematically establish the correct interpretation. When we interpret these sections properly according to the principles of *samanvaya* given in the Introduction, they remain congruent with the theistic conclusions of the entire Vedic literature, and do not lend support to any other interpretation.

### **Adhikaraṇa 4: Brahman is the Only Original Cause**

*Viśaya*: If the materialistic impersonalist speculators cannot find support in the Vedic literature for their pet theory, that the creation arises from matter alone, by taking Vedic statements out of context, their next tactic is to accuse the *Vedas* of inconsistency. Because the Supreme Brahman is called by many different names in the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, they may say that the Vedic literatures contain many conflicting theories of creation. The modern scientific critics are especially quick to assert that the Vedic literature is the quaint mythology of a primitive people, and that their scientific knowledge has made tremendous advancement since those ancient times. But all these arguments are pointless, because actually the Vedic literature consistently presents the fact that the the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the sole cause and ingredient of the cosmic creation.

*Samśaya*: The Sāṅkhya theorist thus raises another doubt: “It cannot be said that the *Vedānta* describes Brahman as the sole cause of the universe, for the *Vedānta* philosophy does not describe a single original cause of creation.”

*Pūrvapakṣa*: In *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1 *ātma* [self] is revealed as the source of creation in the following words:

*tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ*

“From *ātmā* the sky was born.”

Another passage [*Tatittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1] describes *asat* [non-existence] as the original cause in the following words:

*asad vā idam agra āsīt tato vā sad ajāyata tad ātmānaṁ svayam akuruta*

“In the beginning was non-existence. From non-existence existence was born. Existence created the self.”

Another passage [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.9.1] affirms that *ākāśa* [sky] is the original cause:

*asya lokasya kā gatiḥ ity ākāśa itī hovāca*

“What is the origin of this world? Sky is the origin, he said.”

Another passage [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1.11.5] affirms that breath [*prāṇa*] is the original cause in the following words:

*sarvāṇi hā vā imāni bhūtāni prāṇam evābhisamviśanti*

“Everything was born from breath and ultimately enters into breath again.”

Another passage again proclaims *asat* [non-existence] as the original cause in the following words:

*asad evedam agra āsīt tat samabhavat*

“In the beginning was non-existence. From non-existence this world was manifested.”

Another passage [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1] proclaims Brahman the original cause in the following words:

*sad eva saumyedaṁ agra āsīt*

“O saintly one, in the beginning was Brahman.”

Another passage [*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.7] proclaims *avyākṛta* [the unmanifested] as the original cause in the following words:

*tad vaidam tarhi avyākṛtam āsīt tan-nāma-rūpābhyām vyākriyata*

“In the beginning was the unmanifested. From it all the names and forms have come.”

Many other passages could also be quoted to show the different theories of creation. Because in these passages of the *Vedas* many different things have been described as the sole original cause of creation, it cannot be said that Brahman is the sole cause of the creation of the world. However, it is possible to say that *pradhāna* is the sole cause of creation, as we find in the passage beginning with the word *tarhi* already quoted from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. If this view is accepted, then the contradiction of seeing one thing sometimes as the original cause and sometimes as a product of the original cause becomes at once resolved. Because it is all-pervading the *pradhāna* can appropriately be called *ātmā*, *ākāśa*, and *brahma*, because it is the resting-place of all transformations and because it is eternal it may appropriately be called *asat*, and because it is the origin of all breathing it may metaphorically be called breath. When the scriptures state that the original cause performed activities, such as thinking. *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.5 explains *sa aikṣata*: “The original cause thought.” these may also be considered metaphors. All this evidence clearly demonstrates that *pradhāna* is the original cause of creation of the world as described in the *Vedānta* literature.

*Siddhānta*: In the context of this argument:

## Sūtra 1.4.14

*kāraṇatvena cākāśādiṣu yathā vyapadiṣtokteḥ*

*kāraṇatvena* – as the cause; *ca* – certainly; *ākāśa* – sky; *ādiṣu* – beginning with; *yathā* – as; *vyapadiṣṭa* – described; *ukteḥ* – from the statement.

**The *Upaniṣads* state that Brahman is the cause of sky and the other elements.**

The word *ca* [certainly] is used here to dispel doubt. It may be said that Brahman is the only cause of the world. Why? Because “the *Upaniṣads* state that Brahman is the cause of sky and the other elements.” The words *yathā vyapadiṣṭam* [as described] mean Brahman who in the *lakṣaṇa-sūtra* of *Vedānta* [1.1.2] and in other places in Vedic literature is described as all-knowing, all-powerful, and full of all other powers and virtues.” This is true because in all *Vedānta* literatures Brahman is described as the original cause of sky and all the elements. That Brahman is all-knowing and full of a host of transcendental qualities, and is described in the following words [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1.2.2]:

*satyaṁ jñānam anantam*

“Brahman is eternal, limitless, and full of knowledge.”

That Brahman is the original cause of all causes is described in these words [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 1.2.3]:

*tasmād vā etasmāt*

“From Brahman sky is manifested.”

The qualities of Brahman are described in the following words [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1]:

*sad eva saumyedaṁ*

“O gentle one, in the beginning was the eternal Brahman.”

Also, in these words [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.3]:

*tad aikṣata bahsyām*

“He thought: I shall become many.”

The truth of Brahman is also described in the following words [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 6.2.3]:

*tat tejo 'srjata*

“Then He created light.”

The relationship between cause and effect in regard to Brahman we will describe later on. The words *atmā*, *ākāśa*, *prāṇa*, *sat*, and Brahman mean all-pervading”, “all-effulgent,” “all-powerful,” “the supreme existence,” and “the greatest,” respectively. These words are very appropriate as names for Brahman. In the same way the statement *sa aikṣata* [He thought.] is very appropriate for Brahman.

Now, describing the meaning of the words *asat* [non-existence] and *avyākṛta* [unmanifested], he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.15

*samākarṣāt*

*samākarṣāt* – from appropriateness.

The words *asat* [non-existence] and *avyākṛta* [unmanifested] also refer to Brahman, for that interpretation is appropriate in this context.

Because it is preceded by the words so ‘*kāmayata* [He desired] the word *asat* in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1 passage *asad vā idam agra āsīt*: “In the beginning was *asat*,” must refer to the Supreme Brahman, and because it is preceded by the words *ādityo brahma* [splendid Brahman] the word *asat* in the passage *asad evedam* [In the beginning was *asat*] must also refer to the Supreme Brahman. Because before the creation of the material world the Supreme Brahman’s names and forms had not existed in the material world, the Supreme Brahman is sometimes known as *asat* [nonexistence].

The idea that *asat* and not the Supreme Brahman is the original cause of creation is refuted in the following statement of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [6.2.1-2]:

*sad eva saumyedaṃ agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyaṃ tad dhaika āhur asad evedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyaṃ tasmād asataḥ saḥ jāyate. kutas tu khalu saumyaivaṃ syād iti hovāca katham asataḥ saḥ jāyeteṣa sat tv eva saumyedaṃ agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyaṃ.*

“O gentle one, in the beginning was *sat*, who is one without a second. Some say that in the beginning was *asat*, who is one without a second, and from that *asat* the *sat* was born. O gentle one,” he said, “how is it possible that the *sat* was born from the *asat*? O gentle one, it is the *sat*, which is one without a second, that existed in the beginning.”

The idea that *asat* was the original cause of creation is also refuted by the argument of time. The argument of time is that is not possible to use the verb “to be” with the noun *asat* [non-existence]. Because it is thus not possible to say “In the beginning non-existence was,” it is also not possible to say that *asat* [non-existence] was the original cause of creation.

In this way the wise declare that it is not possible for non-existence to be the cause of creation and for this reason when *asat* is described as the cause of creation it must refer to the Supreme Brahman, who is *asat* because His transcendental potencies are supremely subtle and fine. That is the proper understanding of the word *asat* in this context.

The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [1.4.7] explains:

*tad vaidam tarhy avyākṛtam  
āsīt tan-nāma-rūpābhyāṃ vyākriyata*

“In the beginning was the *avyākṛta*. From it all the names and forms have come.”

The word *avyākṛta* should be understood to mean Brahman. In the words *sa eṣa iha praviṣṭaḥ*: “Then He entered within,” that immediately follow it becomes clear that the *avyākṛta* that becomes manifested by name and form is the powerful Supreme Brahman who appears by His own wish. Any conclusion other than this would oppose the clear teachings of *Vedānta-sūtra* and the general conclusions of all the *śruti-śāstras*. For these reasons it is therefore confirmed that the Supreme Brahman is the actual cause of the material universes.

## ***Adhikaraṇa 5: The Puruṣa of the Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad Is Brahman***

*Viśaya*: In the next passage the author of the *sūtras* again refutes the Sāṅkhya theory that the cause of the world is the collective activity of the individual living entities [*jīvas*]. We find this theory today in spurious new-age cults that maintain, contrary to everyone’s daily experience, that one can create one’s own reality. This philosophy originates from an attempt to get around the difficulty of atheistic theories of creation discussed earlier, that matter is inert and cannot organize itself into the energetic universe we observe. However, the *jīvas*, being atomic in size and power, do not possess sufficient creative

energy to account for the gigantic material creation. Such unlimited creative power belongs only to the Supreme Brahman.

In the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 4.18, Bālākī Vipra promises “I shall tell you about Brahman,” and proceeds to describe 16 *puruṣas*, beginning with the sun-god, as Brahman. King Ajātaśatru then rejects these instructions and says: “O Bālākī, the person who is the creator of these sixteen *puruṣas*, the person engaged in this *karma* is the actual Brahman.”

*Samśaya*: At this point the doubt may be raised: “Is the superintendent of matter, the enjoyer described in the *sāṅkhya* texts, or is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, to be understood as the Brahman mentioned here?”

*Pūrvapakṣa*: Someone may object: “Because the use of the word *karma* here identifies this Brahman with the experiencing the results of good and bad work, because in the next passage this Brahman is described as sometimes sleeping [*tau ha suptam puruṣam ājagmatuḥ*], and because in the passage after that this Brahman is described as an enjoyer [*tad yathā śreṣṭhī svair bhunkte*], it should be understood that the Brahman here is the *jīva* [individual spirit soul] described in the *tantras*.

“The use of the word *prāṇa* [life-breath] here also confirms that the Brahman described here is the living individual soul. This Brahman [the *jīva*], which is different from matter, should thus be understood as the original cause of the many enjoyer-*puruṣas* and the original cause of their sinless activities as well. In this way it has been proven that the Brahman described in this passage is the individual spirit soul [*jīva*]. The theory that there is a Supreme Personality of Godhead is separate from the individual spirit soul [*jīva*] is thus completely untenable. The text [*sa aikṣata*] that explains that the creator thinks is thus very appropriate if it is understood that the original cause, the controller of the material energy that creates this world, is in fact the individual soul [*jīva*].”

*Siddhānta*: In response to this, he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.16

*jagad-vācivāt*

*jagat* – the world; *vācivāt* – because of the word.

**[The word Brahman here means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because the word *karma* here should be understood] to mean *jagat* [creation].**

The word Brahman here does not mean the *kṣetrajña* [individual spiritual soul] described in the *tantras*, but rather it means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is known by study of *Vedānta*. Why? Because of the use of the word *jagat*. Because it is accompanied by the word *jagat*, the word *karma* in this passage means “the material world composed of a mixture of matter and spirit.” Because He is the original creator, this *karma* [material world] may be understood to be His property [*yasya karma*]. The truth is this: the word *karma*, which is derived from the verb *kr* [to do, create] here means creation. When this interpretation is accepted the actual meaning of the word here is understood. This interpretation refutes the mistaken idea that the individual spirit soul [*jīva*] is the original creator. Even the Kapila-tantra does not accept the individual living entity as the original creator. One also cannot say that by *adhyāsa* [association] the individual living entity may be considered the creator of the material world, for all the scriptures maintain that the spirit soul is always aloof from matter. For these reasons it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is the original creator of the material world. It cannot be that King Ajātaśatru speaks lies in this passage. Rejecting Bālākī’s teaching that the sixteen *puruṣas* [persons] are Brahman, Ajātaśatru promises, “I will tell you about Brahman.” If Ajātaśatru then teaches

that the *jīvas* [individual spirit souls] are Brahman then his teaching is no different than Bālākī's, and he is dishonest to reject Bālākī's instruction as untrue, and then teach the same instruction as the truth. In this way the meaning of this passage is understood. "You have described these *puruṣas* [persons] as Brahman, but I will tell you of someone who is the creator of all of them," is the gist of Ajātaśatru's statement. In this way it should be understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original cause and the entire material world is His creation.

*idaṁ hi viśvaṁ bhagavān ivetaro  
yato jagat-sthāna-nirodha-sambhavāḥ*

"The Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead is Himself this cosmos, and still He is aloof from it. From Him only has this cosmic manifestation emanated, in Him it rests, and into Him it enters after annihilation." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.20]

*ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mām  
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

"I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts." [Bhagavad-gītā 10.8]

*Pūrvapakṣa*: If someone objects "Because it mentions *mukhya-prāṇa* [the chief breath of life] the Brahman here must be the *jīva* and not anyone else," then he replies:

## Sūtra 1.4.17

*jīva-mukhya-prāṇa-līṅgān neti cet tad-vyākhyātam*

*jīva* – the individual spiritual entity; *mukhya* – the chief; *prāṇa* – breath of life; *līṅgān* – because of the characteristics; *na* – not; *iti* – thus; *cet* – if; *tad* – that; *vyākhyātam* – has been explained.

**If the objection is raised that the *jīva* or chief breath of life is described as Brahman in this passage, then I say, "No. This has already been explained [in Sūtra 1.1.31]."**

In Sūtra 1.1.31, which dealt with the conversation of Indra and Prataṛdana, this question was conclusively decided. There it was explained that in a passage where in both the beginning and the end Brahman was explicitly named, what in the beginning may seem perhaps by its characteristics to refer to the *jīvas* or something else, without them being explicitly mentioned, must be taken as referring to Brahman also.

This passage from the *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* begins with the words *brahma te bravāṇi*: "Now I will tell you about Brahman," and ends with the words *sarvān pāpmāno 'pahatya sarveṣāṁ bhūtānām śreṣṭham ādhipatyam paryeti ya eva veda*: "A person who understands this becomes free from all sins. He becomes the king of all men." Because of these words understood according to the explanation given in the conversation of Indra and Prataṛdana [Sūtra 1.1.31] and because of the other arguments given here, the words *yasya caitat karma* in this passage of *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* should not be understood to refer to anything other than Brahman, the Personality of Godhead.

Someone many object, "Certainly you may connect the words *karma* and *prāṇa* with the word *etat* and then interpret them to refer to Brahman, but still there are direct references to the *jīva* in this passage of *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*. The evidence of the questions and answers in this passage make it impossible to

consider Brahman different from the *jīva*. In the question about the sleeper the *jīva* is asked about, and in the questions about the place of sleep, the *naḍīs*, and the senses, the *jīva*, who is here called *prāṇa*, is also asked about. It is the *jīva* who awakens at the end. In this way the entire passage is about the *jīva*. In this way it may be understood that the *jīva* is the Supreme.”

This argument is based on the rest of the passage quoted from *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 4.18, which is given in its entirety below:

Bālākī first mentions the *puruṣa* in the sun as Brahman. Then on being refuted by Ajātaśatru, he goes on mentioning various *puruṣas* in the moon, lightning, the thundercloud, in the wind, in the ether, in the fire, in the waters, in the mirror, in the shadow, in the echo, in sound, in sleep, in body, in the right eye, and in the left eye. All these were refuted by Ajātaśatru. Then having exhausted all his ideas of Brahman, Bālākī fell silent. Ajātaśatru said to him, “Is this as far as your knowledge goes, O Bālākī?” “Thus far only,” he replied.

Ajātaśatru said, “Do not speak proudly without cause, saying ‘Let me tell you about Brahman.’ O Bālākī, the person who is the creator of these sixteen *puruṣas*, the person engaged in this *karma* is the actual Brahman.” Then Bālākī approached him with fuel in his hand, saying, “Let me accept you as *guru*.”

Ajātaśatru said, “I consider it unnatural that a *kṣatriya* should be the *guru* of a *brāhmaṇa*. Come, I will tell you all I know.” Taking Bālākī by the hand, Ajātaśatru went out. They came to a man asleep. Ajātaśatru pushed him with his staff, and the man immediately got up. Ajātaśatru said to Bālākī, “Where was this sleeping soul resting? Where did he go, and from where did he return upon awakening?” Bālākī did not know what to say. Then Ajātaśatru said to Bālākī, “The vessels of the heart named Hitā surround the heart membrane; thin as a hair divided into a thousand parts and filled with the minute essence of various colors—white, black, yellow and red—when a *jīva* is in dreamless sleep, he abides therein.

“Then he is absorbed in that *prāṇa*. Then speech enters into it with all names, sight enters into it with all forms, hearing enters into it with all sounds, the mind enters into it with all thoughts. As sparks go out in all directions from a blazing fire, when the soul awakens, all the *prāṇas* go out to their stations; from the *prāṇas* come the *devas*, from the *devas* the worlds. This is the true *prāṇa*, identical with *prajñā*; entering this body and soul, to the hair and nails. The subordinate souls follow this Soul, as the household follows the householder. As the householder feeds with his household, and as the household feeds on the householder, so this Soul, itself *prajñā*, feeds with those souls, and those souls feed on this Soul. As long as Indra did not know this Soul, the *asuras* defeated him. When he knew Him, then then having conquered and slain the *asuras*, he attained the pre-eminence of all the demigods and all beings, he attained sovereignty and empire. Thus too it is with him who has this knowledge; having destroyed all sins, he attains the pre-eminence of all beings, and sovereignty and empire, who knows thus, who knows thus.”

To answer this doubt he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.18

*anyārthaṁ tu jaiminiḥ praśna-vyākhyānābhyām api caivam eke*

*anya* – another; *arthaṁ* – meaning; *tu* – but; *jaiminiḥ* – Jaimini; *praśna* – with the questions; *vyākhyānābhyām* – and answers; *api* – also; *ca* – and; *evam* – in this way; *eke* – some.

**Jaimini thinks these questions and answers convey a different meaning, and some versions of the text also give a different meaning.**

The word *tu* [but] is used here to dispel doubt. The description of the *jīva* here has a different meaning. Jaimini considers that this passage explains that Brahman and the *jīva* are different. Why? Because of the questions and answers in this passage. The questions ask about the living soul, sleeping and awake, who is different from the life-breath. The text reads: *kvaiṣa etad bālāke puruṣa śayiṣṭa kva vā etad abhūt kuta etad agāt*: “O Bālākī, where does this person rest while he sleeps? From where does he come when he wakes?” In this question the difference between Brahman and the *jīva* may be clearly seen. The answer is given, *yadā suptaḥ svapnaṁ na kañcana paśyati tathāsmiṁ prāṇa evaikadhā bhavati*: “When he sleeps without seeing a dream he becomes one with the life-breath.” The passage *etasmād ātmanaḥ prāṇa yathāyatanaṁ vipratīṣṭante prāṇebhyo devā devebhyo lokāḥ*: “From that Supreme Self the breath of life comes. From the breath of life the demigods come. From the demigods the planets come,” shows the difference between Brahman and the *jīva*.

The word *prāṇa* here means Lord Paramātmā, because Paramātmā is famous as the resting-place of dreamless sleep. Into Him the *jīvas* merge, and from Him they become manifested again. The meaning of the following passage is that the *nāḍīs* are merely the gateways leading to the realm of sleep. The Paramātmā should be understood to be where the *jīva* sleeps, and from whom the *jīva* emerges to enjoy. In the Vājasaneyī recension of this conversation between Bālākī and Ajātaśatru, the *jīva* is described as *viññānamaya* [full of knowledge] and Brahman is clearly distinguished from him. In that reading the question is, *ya eṣa viññānamayaḥ puruṣaḥ kvaiṣa tadābhūt kuta etad agāt*: “O Bālākī, where does this person full of knowledge rest while he sleeps? From where does he come when he wakes?” The answer is given, *ya eṣo 'ntar hṛdaya ākāśas tasmiṁ śete*: “He rests in the sky within the heart.” We have already discussed in *Sūtra* 1.3.14 that the Supreme Brahman is found in the small sky within the heart of the living entities. In this way it is proved that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the object of knowledge taught in this passage.

## **Adhikaraṇa 6: The Ātmā of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5 is Brahman and Not Jīva**

*Viśaya*: The materialistic impersonalist speculators again try to misuse the authority of the Vedic literatures to prove their theory that the *pradhāna*, not Brahman, is the source of creation, and that knowledge of the *jīvas* is the cause of liberation. In this example they try to redefine the word *ātmā*, which primarily signifies Paramātmā, the Supersoul or Self of existence. There is a famous passage in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5 where Yājñavalkya teaches his wife Maitreyī about Brahman:

Yājñavalkya had two wives, and Kātyāyanī. Maitreyī was conversant with Brahman, but Kātyāyanī had only such knowledge as is commonly possessed by women. Yājñavalkya, when he was preparing to give up the life of a householder and enter into the forest, said “Maitreyī, certainly I am going away from this my house, into the forest. Let us make a settlement between you and Kātyāyanī.”

Maitreyī said “My lord, if all the wealth in this whole earth were to belong to me, tell me, would I be immortal by it, or not?” Yājñavalkya replied “No, your life would be like the life of rich people, but there is no hope of immortality by wealth.” Then Maitreyī said “What use is that by which I do not become immortal? What my lord knows of immortality, tell that clearly to me.”

Yājñavalkya said, “You who are truly dear to me, and you have increased what is dear to me in you. Therefore if you like, I will explain it to you, and mark well what I say.



“Verily a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the husband is dear.

“Verily sons are not dear, that you may love the sons; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the sons are dear.

“Verily a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the wife is dear.

“Verily wealth is not dear, that you may love wealth; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore wealth is dear.

“Verily cattle are not dear, that you may love the cattle; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the cattle are dear.

“Verily the *brāhmaṇas* are not dear, that you may love the *brāhmaṇas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *brāhmaṇas* are dear.

“Verily the *kṣatriyas* are not dear, that you may love the *kṣatriyas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *kṣatriyas* are dear.

“Verily the worlds are not dear, that you may love the worlds; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the worlds are dear.

“Verily the *devas* are not dear, that you may love the *devas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *devas* are dear.

“Verily the *Vedas* are not dear, that you may love the *Vedas*; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the *Vedas* are dear.

“Verily the living entities are not dear, that you may love the living entities; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore the living entities are dear.

“Verily everything is not dear, that you may love everything; but that you may love the Self [*ātmā*], therefore everything is dear.

“Verily, the Self should be seen, heard, worshiped, and always meditated on. O Maitreyī, by seeing, hearing, worshiping, and understanding the Self [*ātmā*], everything becomes known.”

“Whoever looks for the *brāhmaṇas* elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the *brāhmaṇas*.

“Whoever looks for the *kṣatriyas* elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the *kṣatriyas*.

“Whoever looks for the worlds elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the worlds.

“Whoever looks for the *devas* elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the *devas*.

“Whoever looks for the living entities elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by the living entities.

“Whoever looks for everything elsewhere than the Self, is abandoned by everything.

“These *brāhmaṇas*, these *kṣatriyas*, these worlds, these *devas*, these *Vedas*, all these living entities, all and everything is the Self.

“Now as the sounds of a drum being beaten cannot be seized externally by themselves, but the sound is seized when the drum is seized, or the beater of the drum; or as the sounds of a conch being blown cannot be seized externally by themselves, but the sound is seized when the conch is seized, or the blower of the conch; and as the sounds of a flute being played cannot be seized externally by themselves, but the sound is seized when the flute is seized, or the player of the

flute; as smoke comes from a fire made with wet fuel, the *Rg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas*, *Vidyās*, *Upaniṣads*, *ślokas*, *sūtras*, *vyākhyās*, and *anuvyākhyās*, come from the breath of the Supreme Person. As the ocean is the sole resting place of all waters, so the skin is the sole resting-place of all tactile sensations, the nose is the sole resting-place of all fragrances, the tongue is the sole resting-place of all tastes, the eyes are the sole resting-place of all forms, the ears are the sole resting-place of all sounds, the mind is the sole resting-place of all thoughts and desires, the heart is the sole resting place of all knowledge, the hands are the sole resting-place of all work, the genitals are the sole resting-place of all material bliss, the anus is the sole resting-place of all expulsions, the feet are the sole resting-place of all pathways, and words are the sole resting-place of all the *Vedas*. As a little salt merges into water and cannot be again extracted from it, although the water itself becomes salty, so does this great being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them. When He has departed, there is no more knowledge, I say, O Maitreyī.” Thus spoke Yājñavalkya.

Then Maitreyī said, “Here, Sir, you have landed me in utter bewilderment. Indeed I do not understand Him [the Self].” But he replied, “Maitreyī, I say nothing that is bewildering. Verily, that Self is imperishable, of an indestructible nature. For when there seems to be duality, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other, one salutes the other, one hears the other, one perceives the other, one touches the other, one knows the other; but when the Self only is all this, how should he see another, how should he smell another, how should he taste another, how should he salute another, how should he hear another, how should he touch another, how should he know another? That Self is to be described by ‘No, no!’ He is incomprehensible, for He cannot be understood; He is imperishable, for He cannot perish; He is unattached, for He does not attach Himself; unfettered, He does not suffer, He does not fail. How, O Beloved, should one know the Knower?

“Thus, O Maitreyī, you have been instructed; thus far goes immortality.” Having said this, Yājñavalkya went away into the forest.

The most significant verses in this passage are the following:

*na vā are patyuh kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati*

“A husband is not dear because the wife loves the husband; the husband is dear because she loves the Self [ātmā].”

He also says:

*na vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ  
bhavati ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati*

“Everything is not dear because one loves everything; everything is dear because one loves the Self [ātmā].”

Again, he says:

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyī ātmano vā are darśanena  
śravaṇena matyā vijñānena idaṁ sarvaṁ veditam*

“The Self should be seen, heard, worshiped, and always meditated on. O Maitreyī, by seeing, hearing, worshiping, and understanding the Self [ātmā], everything becomes known.”

*Samśaya*: In this passage which self is to be understood: the *jīva* [individual spirit soul] described in the *Kapila-tantra*, or the *Paramātmā* [the Supreme Personality of Godhead]?

*Pūrvapakṣa*: Because in this passage he describes the love of husband and wife and because in the middle of the passage he says: *etebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāny evānuvinaśyati na pretya-samjñāsti*: “He leaves the material elements, his body is destroyed, he dies and is no longer conscious,” words that clearly describe a resident of the material world who is subject to birth and death, and because at the end he says: *vijñātāram are kena vijānīyāt*: “How should we understand the person who is the knower?” this passage should be interpreted to describe the *jīva*, who is the knower described in the *Kapila-tantra*.

You may object: “But it says that by knowing the Self everything becomes known. Certainly this refers to the Paramātmā and not the *jīva*.” but this objection is not valid. The *jīva* takes birth in this world with an aim to enjoy and one may figuratively say that by knowing the *jīva* one knows everything for one then knows the world around him meant for his enjoyment. You may again object, “This passage cannot refer to the *jīva* because the text says *amṛtatvasya tu nāśāsti vittena*: ‘By knowing Him one becomes immortal.’ Because it is only by knowing the Paramātmā that one becomes immortal, how can this passage refer to the *jīva*?” This objection is also invalid because one may also attain immortality by understanding that the *jīva* is by nature different from matter. In the same way, all descriptions in this passage that seem to refer to Brahman should be understood to refer to the *jīva*. Actually this entire passage describes the *jīva*. Therefore it should be understood that the material nature, which is under the control of the *jīva*, is the original cause of the world.

*Siddhānta*: In this matter:

### Sūtra 1.4.19

*vākyānvayāt*

*vākya* – statement; *anvayāt* – because of the connection.

**The context of this passage [proves that Brahman is the object of discussion.]**

In this passage the Paramātmā, and not the *jīva* of the *Kapila-tantra*, is described. Why? Because in the context of the whole passage, including what precedes and follows this quote, that is the appropriate interpretation. Three sages also confirm this interpretation:

### Sūtra 1.4.20

*pratijñā-siddher liṅgam āśmarathyaḥ*

*pratijñā* – of the promise; *siddher* – of the fulfillment; *liṅgam* – the mark; *āśmarathyaḥ* – Āśmarathya.

**Āśmarathya [maintains that the Self here is Paramātmā because only in that way] is the promise [that by knowledge of the Self everything is known] fulfilled.**

Āśmarathya maintains that the promise *ātmano vijñānena sarvaṁ veditam*: “By knowledge of the Self everything is known,” indicates that the Self referred to here is the Paramātmā. It is not taught here that by knowledge of the *jīva* everything becomes known. On the other hand, everything becomes known by knowledge of the cause of all causes. It is not possible to interpret these words in a figurative way, because after promising that by knowing the Self everything becomes known, in the passage beginning *brahma taṁ parādāt*: “One who thinks the *brāhmaṇas* rest in a place other than the Self is spurned by the *brāhmaṇas*. One who thinks the *kṣatriyas* rest in a place other than the Self is spurned by the

*kṣatriyas*. One who thinks the worlds rest in a place other than the self is spurned by the worlds,” he affirms that the Paramātmā is the form of everything and the resting place of the *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, and world. For these reasons it is not possible that the Self here can be any other than the Paramātmā.

It is also not possible for the individual living entity who remains under the control of *karma* to be the original cause of all causes described in the passage beginning *tasya vā etasya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam*: “The *Vedas* were manifested from the breathing of this Supreme Being.” It is also not possible for the sage Yājñavalkya to have taught his wife, who had renounced all wealth and material benefits to attain liberation, only about the *jīva* and not about the Supreme Brahman. It is also not possible that the Self referred to here is the *jīva* because one cannot attain liberation simply by knowing the *jīva*. That liberation is attained only by understanding the Supreme Brahman is confirmed in the following statement of *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8 and 6.15: *tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti*: “By understanding the Supreme Brahman one is able to transcend death.” For all these reasons it should be understood that the Self described in this passage is the Paramātmā.

The objection may be raised: “Because the Self in this passage is described as the object of love for the husband and other persons, this self must be the *jīva* bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death and not the Paramātmā. It cannot be said that the Self described here must be the Paramātmā because that interpretation answers the promise of Yājñavalkya to speak certain words, nor can it be said that the Self here must be the Paramātmā because this Self is the shelter of the devotees, the creator of everything, all-powerful, and the origin of transcendental bliss.

The *jīva* may also be these things, as the *Padma Purāṇa* explains:

*yenārcito haris tena tarpitāni jaganty api rajyanti jantavas tatra sthāvarā jaṅgamā api*

“One who worships Lord Hari pleases all the worlds. All moving and non-moving creatures love the devotee.”

In this way the Self described here is not the Paramātmā.”

*Siddhānta*: Fearing that the opponent may speak these words, he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.21

*utkramiṣyata evaṁ bhāvād ity auḍulomiḥ*

*utkramiṣyataḥ* – of a person about to depart; *evaṁ* – in this way; *bhāvāt* – from this condition; *iti* – thus; *auḍulomiḥ* – Auḍulomi.

**Auḍulomi maintains that one about to become liberated attains the transcendental qualities of the Lord.**

The word *utkramiṣyataḥ* here means a person who by following spiritual practices attains the Paramātmā. *Evaṁ bhāvāt* means “because of being dear to everyone.” *Ātmā* means “Paramātmā.” This is the opinion of Auḍulomi. The passage *patyuh kāmāya patiḥ priyobhavati*: “A husband is not dear because the wife loves the husband; a husband is dear because she loves the Self,” means that if a wife thinks “By my own power I shall become dear to my husband” her husband will not love her. However, if the wife loves the Paramātmā, then Lord Paramātmā will make everyone love this devotee-wife. The word *kāma* here means “desire” and *kāmāya* means “to fulfill the desire.” The use of the dative case here is described in Pāṇini’s *sūtras* [*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.3.1 or *Siddhānta-kaumudī* 581] in the following words:

*kriyārthopapadasya ca karmaṇi sthāninaḥ*

“The dative case is used for the object of a verb understood but not expressed. In the dative two verbs are used together and the action is in the future.”

In other words this passage [*patyuh kāmāya*] of the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* means “When He is worshiped with devotion, the Supreme Personality of Godhead makes everything a source of happiness for His devotees.” This is corroborated by the following statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.14.13]:

*akiñcanasya dāntasya  
śāntasya sama-cetasah  
mayā santuṣṭa-manasah  
sarvāḥ sukhamayā diśah*

“For a person who is renounced, self-controlled, peaceful, equal to all, and who finds his happiness in Me, every place in this world is full of joy.”

The passage *patyuh kāmāya* may also be interpreted to mean “Trying to please the husband does not please him. Only when the wife tries to please the Paramātmā does the husband become pleased.” This interpretation is corroborated by the following statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.23.27]:

*prāṇa-buddhi-manah-svātma-  
dārāpatya-dhanādayaḥ  
yat-samparkāt priyā āsaṁs  
tataḥ ko 'nyaḥ paraḥ priyaḥ*

“Our life, property, home, wife, children, house, country, society, and all paraphernalia which are very dear to us are expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Who is more dear to us than the Supreme Person?”

In this interpretation the word *kāma* means “happiness” and the dative case is used in the same sense as the previous interpretation. This interpretation means that by the will of the Paramātmā, by the nearness of the Paramātmā, or by the touch of the Paramātmā, even what is ordinarily unpleasant becomes blissful. Therefore when the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ*: “The Self should be seen,” the word *ātmā* means the dear Lord Hari. It is not possible to interpret the word *ātmā* here to mean the *jīva* because here the primary meaning of *ātmā* is the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead. To interpret *ātmā* in any other way would contradict the way the word had been used in the previous passage [*vākya-bheda*]. We do not see how it is possible to interpret *ātmā* in a way different from the way it was clearly used in the immediately previous passage. In this way the word *ātmā* in *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ* must be the Paramātmā. In both passages [*ātmanas tu kāmāya* and *ātmā vā*] the word *ātmā* cannot mean the *jīva*, for in these contexts the word *ātmā* can only refer to Brahman.

Although Auḍulomi is a *nirguṇa-ātmavādī* [impersonalist] as will be explained later on [*Vedānta-sūtra* 4.4.6] in the words *citi tan-mātreṇa tad-ātmakatvād ity auḍulomiḥ*: “When he is liberated the *jīva* enters the Supreme Intelligence, for the *jīva* is actually intelligence only. This is the opinion of Auḍulomi.” Still Auḍulomi maintains that Lord Hari should be worshiped in order to dispel ignorance and reveal the true nature of the self, as will be explained in the following words [*Vedānta-sūtra* 3.4.45]: *ārtvīyam ity auḍulomis tasmai hi parikrīyate*: “Just as a Vedic priest is purchased to perform a *yajña*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is purchased by His devotees’ love.” In this way it is proved that pure devotion to Lord Hari fulfills all desires.

Our opponent may say: “So be it. However, in the same *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [2.4.12] we find the following words:

*sa yathā saindhava-khilya udake prāptam udakam evānulīyate na hāsyodgrahaṇāyaiva syād yato yatas tv ādīta lavaṇam evaivaṁ vā. Are idaṁ mahad bhūtam anantam apāraṁ vijñāna-ghana evaitebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāny evānuvinaśyati*

“As a little salt merges into water and cannot be again extracted from it, although the water itself becomes salty, so does this great being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them.”

How do you reconcile this statement with your interpretation of the word *ātmā* in this *Upaniṣad*? Clearly this passage refers to the *jīva* described in the *Kapila-tantra*, because that is the appropriate interpretation.”

To answer this doubt he says:

## Sūtra 1.4.22

*avasthiter iti kāśakṛtsnaḥ*

*avasthiter* – because of residence; *iti* – thus; *kāśakṛtsnaḥ* – Kāśakṛtsna.

**This passage refers to Paramātmā, for Paramātmā resides within the *jīva*. This is the opinion of Kāśakṛtsna.**

In this statement the word *avasthiteḥ* [residing] which refers to the Paramātmā, the Great Being who is different from the *jīva*, and who is described as *vijñāna-ghana* [full of knowledge], teaches that the Paramātmā is different from the *jīva* and resides within him. Kāśakṛtsna considers that because the Paramātmā and the *jīva* are different the words *mahad-bhūtam* [Great Being], *anantam* [limitless] and *vijñāna-ghana* cannot refer to the *jīva*. A summary of the passage from *Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* under discussion follows.

*yenāhaṁ nāmṛtaḥ syāṁ kim ahaṁ tena kuryām*

“Tell me what I must do to become free of death.” [*Brhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.5.4]

Asked this question about the means to attain liberation, the sage answered:

*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyy ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānena idaṁ sarvaṁ viditam*

“The Self should be seen, heard, worshiped, and always meditated on. O Maitreyī, by seeing, hearing, worshiping, and understanding the Self, everything becomes known.”

In this way he explains that the worship of Paramātmā is the way to attain liberation. Then he says:

*sa yathā dundubher hanyamānasya  
bāhyāñ chabdāñ chakrūyād grahaṇāya dundubhes tu  
grahaṇena dundubhy-āghātasya vā śabdo gṛhītaḥ*

“As the sounds of a drum when beaten cannot be seized externally, although when the drum or the player of the drum are seized then the sounds are also seized.”

Thus, in a very general way he explains the proper method of worshiping the Paramātmā: sense-control. He continues in the following words:

*sa yathārdhraidho ‘gner abhyāhitasya pṛthag dhūmā viniścaranty evaṁ vā are ‘sya mahato bhūtasya niśvāsitam etad yad ṛg vedo yajur vedaḥ sāma-vedo ‘tharvāṅgīrasa itihāsaḥ purāṇaṁ*

*vidyā upaniṣadaḥ ślokāḥ sūtrāṇy anuvyākhyānāni vyākhyānānīṣṭam hutam āsitam pāyitam ayaṁ calokaḥ paraś ca lokaḥ sarvāṇi ca bhūtāny asyaikaitāni sarvāṇi niśvasitāni. Sa yathā sarvāsām apāṁ samudra ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām sparśānām tvacaikāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām rasānām jihvaikāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām gandhānām nāsikaikāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām rūpānām cakṣur ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām śabdānāmśrotram ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām saṅkalpānām mana ekāyanam evaṁ sarvāsām vidyānām hṛdayam ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām karmaṇām hastāv ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām ānandānām upastha ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣāmvisargānām pāyur ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām adhvanām pādāv ekāyanam evaṁ sarveṣām vedānām vāg ekāyanam*

“As smoke comes from a fire made with wet fuel, the *Rg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, *Purāṇas*, *Itihāsas*, *Vidyās*, *Upaniṣads*, *ślokas*, *sūtras*, *vyākhyās*, and *anuvyākhyās*, come from the breath of the Supreme Person. As the ocean is the sole resting place of all waters, so the skin is the sole resting-place of all tactile sensations, the nose is the sole resting-place of all fragrances, the tongue is the sole resting-place of all tastes, the eyes are the sole resting-place of all forms, the ears are the sole resting-place of all sounds, the mind is the sole resting-place of all thoughts and desires, the heart is the sole resting place of all knowledge, the hands are the sole resting-place of all work, the genitals are the sole resting-place of all material bliss, the anus is the sole resting-place of all expulsions, the feet are the sole resting-place of all pathways, and words are the sole resting-place of all the *Vedas*.”

To encourage the desire for liberation he says:

*sa yathā saindhava-khilya udake prāptam udakam evānulīyate na hāsyodgrahaṇāyaiva syād yato yatas tv ādīta lavaṇam evaivaṁ vā. are idaṁ mahad bhūtam anantam apāraṁ vijñāna-ghana evaitebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāny evānuvinaśyati*

“As a little salt merges into water and cannot be again extracted from it, although the water itself becomes salty, so does this Great Being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them.”

In this way he explains that the supreme object of worship is immanent: always near to the *jīva*. In the words *etebhyo bhūtebhyaḥ samutthāya tāny evānuvinaśyati*: “So does this great being, limitless, endless, and full of knowledge, rise from these elements and then vanish into them,” he describes the non-devotees who do not worship the Lord, who mistake the external material body for the self, who at the time of death remain in the cycle of repeated birth and death, and for whom the Supreme Lord remains invisible, hidden within the material elements.

The words *na pretya samjñāsti*, “After death he becomes free of the world of names,” describe the devotee when he leaves the material body and attains liberation. At that time the liberated devotee becomes aware of his real spiritual identity. He then considers all material designations to be the same and he no longer thinks of himself as a human being, demigod, or any other kind of material being. Consider the words:

*yatra hi dvaitam iva bhavati tad itara itaram paśyati tad itara itaram jighrati tad itara itaram rasayate tad itara itaram abhivadati tad itara itaram śṛṇoti tad itara itaram manute tad itara itaram sprśati tad itara itaram vijānāti yatra tv asya sarvam ātmaivābhūt tat tena kaṁ paśyet tat tena kaṁ jighret tat kena kaṁ rasayet tat kena kaṁ abhivadet tat kena kaṁ śṛṇuyāt tat kena kaṁ manvīta tata tena kaṁ sprśet tat tena kaṁ vijānīyāt*

“Where there is duality one sees another, smells another, tastes another, offers respect to another, hears another, thinks of another, touches another, and is aware of another. But for one for whom the Supreme Self is everything how can he see another? How can he smell another?

How can he taste another? How can he offer respect to another? How can he hear another? How can he think of another? How can he touch another? How can he be aware of another?"

This explains how the liberated *jīva* takes shelter of the the Paramātmā. The words *yenedam sarvaṁ vijānāti taṁ kena vijānīyāt*: "How can a person, even if he understands the entire world, understand Him?" teach that it is very difficult to understand the Supreme Lord. The words *vijñtāram are kena vijānīyāt*: "How can one understand the Supreme Knower?" mean "How can one understand the all-knowing Supreme Personality of Godhead without first worshiping Him and attaining His mercy? There is no other way than this." In this way the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is described as the actual means of liberation. The speaker of the *Upaniṣad* concludes by declaring that actual liberation is the same as attaining the Paramātmā.

From all this it may be understood that this passage of the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* describes the Paramātmā and not the *puruṣa* as described in the *Kapila-tantra*, or the material nature controlled by the *puruṣa*.

## **Adhikaraṇa 7: Brahman is Both Primary and Secondary Cause**

*Viśaya*: Now that he has refuted the atheistic *pradhāna* theory, he will refute some theistic theories and prove that all scriptural descriptions of the cause of the universe refer to the Supreme Brahman. Some philosophers consider that the material world is an illusion, and only the spiritual existence is actually real. However, for this to be the case, the material energy would have to be completely different from the the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The actual Vedic philosophy is that the Lord is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the material manifestation; in other words, He is both the Creator and the ingredient of the material world. In this way it may be understood that the *vivarta* theory, that the material world is an illusion, is untrue and the *pariṇāma* theory that the material world is a transformation of Brahman is the truth taught in the Vedic scriptures.

Let us consider the following scriptural passages:

*tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ*

"From *ātmā* the sky was manifested." [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1]

*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*

"From the Supreme these creatures were born." [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1]

*sad eva saumyedaṁ agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyaṁ tad aikṣata bahu syām prajāyeya*

"O gentle one, in the beginning was the Supreme, who was one without a second. He thought: 'Let me become many. Let me become the father of many.'" [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1]

*sa aikṣata lokān nu sṛjā*

"He thought: 'Now I shall create the worlds.'" [*Aitareya Upaniṣad* 1.1.2]

*Samśaya*: Should Brahman be considering the primary cause or the ingredient of the creation? Because the *Upasniṣads* say *sa aikṣata*: "He thought: 'Now I shall create the worlds'," the first proposal, that Brahman is the primary cause and not the ingredient of creation, should be considered true. Although the *Upaniṣad* says *tasmād vā etasmād ātmana ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ*: "From *ātmā* the sky was manifested," still this should be interpreted to mean only that the Supreme is the primary Creator, and not the ingredient of creation of the worlds. The quotes *tad aikṣata bahu syām prajāyeya*: "He thought, 'Let me become many. Let me become the father of many.'" and *sa aikṣata lokān nu sṛjā*: "He thought: 'Now I shall create the worlds'," because of their clear explanation that the Lord's thinking precedes the creation, show that the Lord is the primary Creator in the same way a potter is the creator



of pots. Because the creation itself and the ingredients of which it is made must have the same nature, the ingredient of the material creation must be the material energy [*prakṛti*]. It is not possible to say that the primary cause of creation is identical with the ingredients of the creation. In the material world made of dull matter, the ingredients are earth and the other elements, and the creator is consciousness, just as pots are made of the elements and the creator of the pots is the conscious potter. Here the pots and the potter are clearly different. Furthermore, many diverse causes may create a single effect. Therefore it cannot be said that a single thing is both the primary cause and the ingredient of creation. The changing material energy [*prakṛti*], which is controlled by the unchanging Brahman is the ingredient of the changing material universe, and Brahman is only its primary cause. This statement is not based only on logic, for it is also supported by the following passage of the *Culika Upaniṣad*:

*vikāra-jananīm ajñām aṣṭa-rūpām ajām dhruvam  
dhyāyate 'dhyāsītā tena tanyate preritā punaḥ  
sūyate puruṣārtham ca tenaivādhiṣṭhitā jagat  
gaur anādy-antavatī sā janitrī bhūta-bhāvinī  
sitāsītā ca raktā ca sarvakām adhunā vibhoḥ  
pibanty enām aṣṭamām avijñātāḥ kumārakāḥ  
ekas tu pibate devaḥ svacchando 'tra vaśānugām  
dhyāna-kriyābhyām bhagavān bhunkte 'sau prasabham vibhuḥ  
sarva-sādhāraṇīm dogdhrīm pīyamānām tu yajvabhiḥ  
catur-vimśati-saṅkhyākām avyaktam vyaktam ucyate*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead meditates on the unborn, eternal, unintelligent material nature [*prakṛti*], which has eight forms, and by His order the material nature creates the material worlds and the various goals of life adopted by the living entities. Material nature is a beginningless, endless cow, the mother of the worlds. Without knowing, her children, the creatures in goodness, passion, and ignorance all drink her nourishing milk. The one independent, all-powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead strongly enjoys her with thought and deed, she who is the milk-giving mother of all, who is drunk by the performers of sacrifice, and who is said to be both the unmanifested and the manifested divided into 24 elements.”

Furthermore, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says:

*yathā sannidhi-mātreṇa gandhaḥ kṣobhāya jāyate  
manaso nopakarṭṛtvāt tathāsau parameśvaraḥ  
sannidhānād yathākāśa-kālādyāḥ kāraṇam taroḥ  
tathāivāparigāmena viśvasya bhagavān hariḥ  
nimitta-mātram evāsau sṛṣṭānām sarga-karmaṇi  
pradhāna-kāriṇī bhūtā yato vai sṛjya-śaktayaḥ*

“When there is a fragrant flower before someone, the fragrance is touched by the smelling power of the person, yet the smelling and the flower are detached from one another. There is a similar connection between the material world and the Supreme Personality of Godhead: actually He has nothing to do with this material world, but He creates by His glance and ordains. In summary, material nature, without the superintendence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cannot do anything. Yet the Supreme Personality is detached from all material activities.”

For these reasons, whatever scriptural passages state that Brahman is the ingredient of the creation should be interpreted to have a different meaning.

*Siddhānta*: To this argument he replies:

### Sūtra 1.4.23

*prakṛtiś ca pratijñā dṛṣṭāntānuparodhāt*

*prakṛtiḥ* – material nature; *ca* – and; *pratijñā* – the proposition to be proved; *dṛṣṭānta* – example; *anuparodhāt* – because of not contradicting.

**Brahman is also the material nature [*prakṛti*] because this view is not contradicted by the statements and examples [given in the scriptures].**

Brahman is the material nature [*prakṛti*], the ingredient of the world. How is that? It is so because *pratijñā-dṛṣṭāntānuparodhāt*, which means “Because this view is not contradicted by the statements and examples of the scriptures.” An example may be given from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.3:

*śvetaketo yan nu saumyedaṁ mahā-manā anūcāna-mānī stabdho ‘sy uta tam ādeśam aprākṣīr  
yenāśrutam śrutam bhavaty amataṁ matam avijñātam vijñātam ity eka-vijñānena sarva-  
vijñāna-viśayā pratijñā*

“Gentle Śvetaketu, you are now very proud and arrogant, thinking yourself a great Vedic scholar. Did you ask for the teaching that makes the unheard heard, the unthinkable thinkable, and the unknown known?”

Here the statement is the existence of a single teaching, the knowledge of which makes everything known. This teaching must be about the ingredient of the world for only that knowledge would not contradict the description in this passage. That ingredient of the world is not different from the original creator of the world. They are one, unlike the pot and the potter, which are different from each other.

The following example is given [*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1.10]:

*yathā saumyaikena mṛt-piṇḍena sarvaṁ mṛṇ-mayaṁ vijñātam syāt*

“O gentle one, as by knowing the nature of clay, everything made of clay becomes known, in the same way by understanding this one teaching everything becomes known.”

These words of the *śruti* must refer to the ingredient of the world. They cannot refer to only the original creator of the world, for by understanding only the potter one does not understand the pot. Therefore, to avoid contradicting these words of the scripture, it must be concluded that Brahman is not only the original creator of the world, but the ingredient of which the world is made as well.

### Sūtra 1.4.24

*abhidhyopadeśāc ca*

*abhidhya* – will; *upadeśāc* – because of the teaching; *ca* – and.

**Because [the scriptures] teach [that in this age the world was created by His] will and [in previous creations the world was also created by His will, it must be concluded that Brahman is both the original cause of creation and the ingredient of the creation as well].**

In this *sūtra* the word *ca* [and] means “and many other things that are not explicitly mentioned here.”

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.6.1] explains:

*so 'kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeya sa tapo 'tapyata tapas taptvā idam sarvam asṛjat. Yad idam kiñcana tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviśat. Tad anupraviśya sac ca tyac cābhavat.*

“He desired: I will become many. I will father many children. He performed austerities and created everything. Then He entered within the world He had created. After He entered He became all that is manifest and all that is unmanifest.”

Because it is here taught that He resides as Paramātmā within all conscious living entities and unconscious matter by His own desire, and because it is also taught here that he is the creator of everything, it must be concluded that He is both the ingredient of the which the creation is made and the original creator and as well.

### Sūtra 1.4.25

*sākṣāc cobhayāmnānāt*

*sākṣāt* – directly; *ca* – certainly; *ubhaya* – both; *āmnānāt* – because of direct statement.

**[Brahman is both creator and the ingredient of creation] because both [truths] are directly stated [in the scriptures].**

The word *ca* here means “certainly.” The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* [2.8.9.6] explains:

*kiṁsvid vanam ka u sa vṛkṣa āsīt  
yato dyāvā-prthivī niṣṭatakṣuḥ  
mañiṣiṇo manasā prcchataitāt  
yad adhyatiṣṭhad bhuvanāni dhārayan*

*brahma vanam brahma sa vṛkṣa āsīt  
yato dyāvā-prthivī niṣṭatakṣuḥ  
mañiṣiṇo manasā prabravīmi  
vo brahmādhyatiṣṭhad buvanāni dhārayan*

“What was the forest? What was the tree? From what tree in what forest did He fashion heaven and earth? Ask these questions, O wise ones. Where did He stand when He created the worlds?”  
“Brahman was the forest. Brahman was the tree. From Brahman He created heaven and earth. O wise ones, I tell you, He stood on Brahman when He created the worlds.”

These questions and answers clearly show that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient from which the creation is made. From the tree-ingredient the creation, designated by the word “heaven and earth” comes. The word *niṣṭatakṣuḥ* means “the Supreme Personality of Godhead created.” Although *niṣṭatakṣuḥ* is plural, the opposite, the singular, is intended here. This is a use of Vedic poetic license. The questions “What is the tree? What is the forest where the tree rests? Where does He stand when He created the worlds?” are asked in terms of the things of this world and the answers describe something beyond this world. In this way it may be understood that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of which the world is made.

### Sūtra 1.4.26

*ātma-kṛteḥ pariṇāmāt*

*ātma* – self; *kṛteḥ* – because of making; *pariṇāmāt* - because of transformation.

**[Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of the creation] because He transformed Himself [into the world].**

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* [2.6.2] says:

*so 'kāmayata*

“He desired: ‘I shall become many.’ ”

It also says [2.7.1]:

*tad ātmānam svayam akuruta*

“He created the world from His own Self.”

In this way the scriptures explain that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient from which the creation is made.

Someone may object: “How can the eternally perfect creator be also the creation?”

To answer this objection he says *pariṇmāt*: “Because He has transformed Himself.” This does not contradict the changelessness of Brahman, for a certain kind of transformation is not incompatible with changelessness.

Here is the truth of this. In the following passages the *śruti* explains that Brahman has three potencies:

*parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*

“The Supreme has many potencies.” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8]

*pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the master of *pradhāna* [material nature], *kṣetrajña* [the individual spirit souls], and *guṇa* [the three material modes].” [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.16]

The *smṛti* [*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*] also explains:

*viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā*

*kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā*

*avidyā-karma-samjñānyā*

*trītyā śaktir ucyate*

“The potency of Lord Viṣṇu is summarized in three categories: namely the spiritual potency, the living entities, and ignorance. The spiritual potency is full of knowledge; the living entities, although belonging to the spiritual potency, are subject to bewilderment; and the third energy, which is full of ignorance, is always visible in fruitive activities.”

In this way the scriptures explain that Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of which the creation is made. He is the creator by the agency of His spiritual potency and He is the ingredient of which the creation is made by the agency of the other two potencies. This interpretation is confirmed by the aphorism *sa-viśeṣeṇa vidhi-niṣedhau viśeṣaṇam upasaṅkrāmate*: “An adjective describes both what a noun is and what it is not.”

The scriptures also explain [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.1]:

*ya eko 'varṇo bahudhā śakti-yogād  
varṇān anekān nihitārtho dadhāti  
vi caiti cānte viśvam ādau sa devaḥ  
sa no buddhyā śubhayā saṁyunaktau*

“May the one, unrivaled Supreme Personality of Godhead, who for His own purpose created the many varieties of living entities by the agency of His potencies, who created everything in the beginning and into whom everything enters at the end, grant pure intelligence to us.”

As the supreme unchangeable, the Supreme Brahman is the original cause of creation, and as the *pariṇāmi* [the transformable], Brahman is also the ingredient of which the creation is made. Brahman is the creator in His subtle nature, and He is the creation itself in His nature as gross matter. In this way it is established that the Supreme Brahman is both creator and creation.

The creation is thus like a lump of clay that may be shaped in different ways. The word *pariṇāmāt* [because of transformation] in this *sūtra* clearly refutes the theory that declares the material world a *vivarta* [illusion] that has no reality. The statement that the material world is an illusion superimposed on Brahman, just as the existence of silver is an illusion superimposed on an oyster shell with a silvery sheen, cannot be accepted because the oyster shell is an object that can be placed before the viewer; but Brahman, cannot be placed before the viewer because He is all-pervading, and therefore an illusion cannot be superimposed on Him. One may object that although the sky is all-pervading, illusions may be superimposed on it. However, Brahman is not like the sky in the sense that the sky may be approached by the material observer, but Brahman remains beyond the reach of the material senses; and therefore an illusion cannot be superimposed on Him. Furthermore, the existence of an illusion implies the existence of something different from the thing on which the illusion is superimposed. Without the existence of something separate there is no possibility of an illusion.

In the end, therefore, the *vivarta* theory postulates the existence of something different from Brahman. This is the fault in their theory. When the scriptures state that the material world is an illusion, it should be understood these words are a device intended to create renunciation. This is the opinion of they who know the truth. The material world, however, displays a complicated structure of different elements grouped in categories of higher and lower, and in this way it is very much unlike an illusion, where nothing is very stable and one thing is continually changing into another. In this way it may be understood that the *vivarta* theory, that the material world is an illusion, is untrue and the *pariṇāma* theory that the material world is a transformation of Brahman is the truth taught in the Vedic scriptures.

## **Sūtra 1.4.27**

*yonis ca hi gīyate*

*yonih* – the place of birth; *ca* – also; *hi* – indeed; *gīyate* – is declared.

**[The scriptures] declare that [Brahman is the] womb [from which the material world was born].**

The *śruti-śāstra* explains:

*yad bhūta-yonim paripaśyanti dhīrāḥ*

“The wise see that Brahman is the womb from which everything was born.” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.6]

*kartāram īśam puruṣam brahma-yonim*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the original creator, the womb from which everything was born.” [*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.1.6]

In these verses the word *yonim* [womb] describes Brahman as the ingredient of creation and the words *kartāraṁ puruṣaṁ* [the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original creator] describe Brahman as the creator. In this way Brahman is described as both the creator and the ingredient of which the creation is made. The word *yonī* [womb] means “the ingredient of which the creation is made.” This is confirmed in the words:

*pṛthivī yonir oṣadhi-vanaspatīnām*

“The earth is the womb from which the trees and plants are born.”

In both common sense and Vedic revelation the creator and the ingredients from which the creation is made are considered are always considered different and it is not possible to say that the creator and the ingredient of which his creation is made are identical. However, the previously quoted passages from the *śruti* clearly explain that in this case Brahman is both the creator and the ingredient of which His creation is made.

## ***Adhikaraṇa 8: All Names Are Names of Lord Viṣṇu***

*Viṣaya:* Someone may object: “Many passages in the scriptures do not support your conclusion at all.” This *adhikaraṇa* is written to dispel this doubt.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* explains:

*kṣaraṁ pradhānam amṛtākṣaraḥ haraḥ*

“Material nature is in constant flux and the Supreme, Lord Hara is eternal and unchanging.” [1.10]

*eko rudro na dvitīyāya tasthuḥ*

“Lord Rudra is the Supreme. He has no rival.” [3.2]

*yo devānāṁ prabhavaś codbhavaś ca  
viśvādhiko rudraḥ śivo maharṣiḥ*

“Lord Śiva, who is known as Rudra, is the omniscient ruler of the universe. He is the father of all the demigods. He gives the demigods all their powers and opulences.” [3.4]

*yadā tamas tan na divā na rātrir  
na san na cāsac chiva eva kevalaḥ*

“When the final darkness comes and there is no longer day or night, when there is no longer being and non-being, then only Lord Śiva exists.” [4.18]

The scriptures also explain:

*pradhānād idam utpannam  
pradhānam adhigacchati  
pradhāne layam abhyeti  
na hy anyat kāraṇaṁ matam*

“From *pradhāna* this material world was born. This world knows only *pradhāna*. This world merges into *pradhāna* at the time of annihilation. Nothing else is the cause of this world.”

*jīvād bhavanti bhūtāni  
jīve tiṣṭhanty acañcalāḥ  
jīve ca layam icchanti  
na jīvāt kāraṇam param*

“From the *jīva* all the elements of this world have come. In the *jīva* they rest without moving, and they finally merge into the *jīva*. Nothing else is the cause of this world.”

*Samśaya*: Should Hara and the other names given in these quotes be understood in their ordinary senses, as names of Lord Śiva, *pradhāna*, and *jīva*, or should they all be understood to be names of the Supreme Brahman?

*Pūrvapakṣa*: The names should all be understood in their ordinary senses, as names of Lord Śiva, *pradhāna*, and *jīva*.

*Siddhānta*: The conclusion follows.

## Sūtra 1.4.28

*etena sarve vyākhyātā vyākhyātāḥ*

*etena* – in this way; *sarve* – all; *vyākhyātāḥ* – explained; *vyākhyātāḥ* – explained.

**All [words in the scriptures] should be interpreted to agree with the explanation [that the Supreme Brahman is the original cause].**

In this *sūtra* the word *etena* means “according to the explanations already given,” *sarve* means “Hara and the other names,” and *vyākhyātāḥ* means “should be understood to be names of the Supreme Brahman because all names are originally names of the Supreme Brahman.”

The *Bhālvaveya-śruti* explains:

*nāmāni viśvāni na santi loke  
yad āvirāsīt puruṣasya sarvam  
nāmāni sarvāṇi yam āviśanti  
taṁ vai viṣṇum paramam udāharanti*

“The names of this world are not different from Him. All names in this world are names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All names refer to Him, Lord Viṣṇu, whom the wise declare is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Vaiśampāyana Muni explains that all these names are names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The *Skanda Purāṇa* also explains:

*śrī-nārāyaṇādīni nāmāni vinānyāni rudrādibhyo harir dattavān*

“Except for Nārāyaṇa and some other names, Lord Hari gave away His names to Lord Śiva and the other demigods.”

This is the rule that should be followed: When the ordinary sense of these names does not contradict the essential teaching of the *Vedas*, the ordinary meaning should be accepted. When the ordinary sense of these names does contradict the teaching of the *Vedas*, these names should be understood to be names of Lord Viṣṇu.

The repetition of the last word [*vyākhyātāḥ*] here indicates the end of the *Adhyāya*.

*sarve vedāḥ paryavasyanti yasmin  
satyānantācintya-śaktau pareśe  
viśvotpatti-sthema-bhaṅgādi-līle  
nityaṁ tasmin nas tu kṛṣṇe matir naḥ*

“May we always fix our hearts on Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the final goal taught by all the *Vedas*, who is the master of unlimited and inconceivable transcendental potencies, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and who in His own pastimes creates, maintains and destroys the material universes.”

*Thus ends the Fourth Pāda of the First Adhyāya of Vedānta-sūtra. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!*